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ABSTRACT

The Media and Disability section of the Proceedings contains the following eight papers: "Disability Publication Demographics and Coverage Models" (Lillie S. Ransom); "Franklin Delano Roosevelt and His Disability: The 'Chicago Tribune' and the 1936 Election" (Darlene Jirikowic); "A Search for Indications of Disability Culture in Magazines Marketed to the Disability Community" (Jeffrey Alan John); "The Americans with Disabilities Act: Defining Deaf People and Their Rights" (Mark Heil Borchert); "Hand-Ling Media Research on Disability: Toward Including a Feminist 'Exile' Perspective on Theory and Practice" (Catherine L. Marston); "From Pity to Pride: People with Disabilities, the Media, and an Emerging Disability Culture" (Miho Iwakuma); "Containment of Image: Critical/Feminist Theory and Perspectives on Disability in the Media" (Robert K. Kalwinsky); and "Community Structural Pluralism and Local Newspaper Coverage of Ethnic Minority Groups and Americans with Disabilities" (Douglas Blanks Hindman; Ann Preston; Robert Littlefield; Dennis Neumann). Individual papers contain references. (RS)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

(80th, Chicago, Illinois, July 30-August 2, 1997):

MEDIA and DISABILITY

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DISABILITY PUBLICATION DEMOGRAPHICS AND COVERAGE MODELS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a summary of two aspects of a larger study conducted in 1994/1995 that analyzed how disability publications may have helped forge group identity for people with disabilities. This paper reports the circulation, target audience, editor demographics, and distribution information for fifty-six (56) disability publications. It also describes a random subset of editors' perceptions of coverage of disability issues.

Methodology

A mail survey was used to ascertain general information and editors' perceptions about their disability publications. In addition, a random subset of 12 editors were interviewed about disability related concepts and coverage issues.

Conclusions

- 131 disability publications identified.
- disability publications fit into Clogston's (1990) progressive/civil rights model of disability coverage.
- three additional/new models of coverage were discerned: activist/political; assimilationist/mainstreaming; and special interest publications.

DISABILITY PUBLICATION DEMOGRAPHICS AND COVERAGE MODELS

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DISABILITY PUBLICATION DEMOGRAPHICS
AND COVERAGE MODELS

INTRODUCTION

The United States society consists of numerous diverse groups of people. Americans regularly affiliate themselves with organizations and groups ([de Tocqueville, 1835]: Heffner, 1984). Groups serve as sources of identity, vehicles for social change, and places of fellowship/comraderie, to name a few of their functions. One such group can be loosely defined as "people" or "persons with disabilities". This group includes people who consciously identify with other people who have some physical, sensorial or mental characteristic considered "lacking" or "deficient", or functioning outside of what is generally considered "normal", as well as people who have been determined by some standard as having a disability but do not themselves consider the disability a defining characteristic in their self-identity. This study was based on the conception of people with disabilities as an emerging social group in the United States. It was also rooted in Kessler's (1990) notion that emerging groups in the United States tended to develop their own media. The notion that a disability press can be documented in the same way the Feminist press or Black press has been documented in scholarly literature is still an open question in this researcher's mind. Therefore, I set out to describe some of the publications for people with disabilities and to uncover some of the editors' perceptions about the publications and their role in developing and fostering group identity for people with disabilities.

Culture and Disability

There are a number of ways to examine the American society's or culture's attitudes about people with disabilities. A common method for communication scholars to explore these attitudes has been to examine mainstream literary, film, and press representations of disability (e.g. Clogston, 1990; Schucman, 1988; Biklen, 1987; and Haller, 1992). Relatively little material, however, existed when this study was conducted, about other aspects of scholarship geared to the field of mass communication. An examination of tables of content, indexes, and glossaries in general mass communication literature, including reporting textbooks, media history texts, and style manuals turned up only a very few references to people with disabilities, disabled people, handicapped people or any other terms that might be used to describe the individuals and publications which are the objects of this study.

In short, little information about people with disabilities or mass media targeted to people with disabilities existed in 1994/1995 in most media texts and journals. Thomas and Carpenter's, Handbook on Mass Media in the United States: The

Industry and Its Audiences, (1994) was a notable exception; one of its articles discusses people with disabilities as media audience members, repeating the common observations by critiquing mass media portrayal of people with disabilities and making the new point that children with disabilities consume television and film products at a higher rate than nondisabled audience members.

Most of the disability publications and affiliated organizations studied in this project are relatively new. Prior to the 1970s and 1980s, many people with disabilities were institutionalized and cared for apart from mainstream society. Often, the people in these institutions were considered incapable of learning or unworthy of education efforts. Therefore, I argue that it is been in the last 15 to 20 years that there has been a substantial group of people with disabilities interested in and capable of reading and supporting publications that focus on disability issues.

Climate for Disability Publications

There has been a growth in the number of organizations serving people with disabilities and an improved legislative climate for people with disabilities during the last half of the twentieth century. The legislation ensures that more people with disabilities are receiving at least K-12 educational opportunities. And the organizational activities encourage people with disabilities, and those who advocate with them or on their behalf, to demand employment training and opportunities, and reasonable accommodations in all aspects of their lives. These factors combined to produce audience members with a growing need for information and an expanded availability of services about which to learn and inform others. These factors provide a ripe climate for media targeted to persons with disabilities.

Parameters of the Study

One of the purposes of the study was to document and analyze perceptions of editors who work for publications targeted to people living with disability. Much of the information about the publications' circulation size, targeted audiences, content, staff demographics, advertisements, subscription fees, and editors' perceptions about the disability community, the disability movement and diversity had not been explored. Neither had their attitudes about mainstream media portrayal of people with disabilities been explored. This information should be documented and studied, however, because these media are an important part of the American mass media landscape. The mere existence of disability publications provides an opportunity to explore the health and resilience of American democratic ideals of free speech and self expression. The existence of disability publications may further challenge mainstream media to be more inclusive and accurate in its representation of people with disabilities and the issues that affect them.

To this end, this paper summarizes two parts* of a larger study of print media written by and for people with disabilities in the United States.

Methodology

The information in this paper is based on a mail survey of editors of periodic publications identified as being for people living with disabilities and on 12 interviews about issues related to disability. The interviews were conducted with a random subset of the editors completing and returning the researcher's questionnaires. Information gathered from these interviews produced evidence that disability publication editors differ in their perceptions and subsequent coverage of disability issues, just as mainstream publications do.

One hundred thirty-one (131) questionnaires were mailed to publications identified by contacting the National Federation of the Blind, the National Association of the Deaf, and identifying relevant material in the Gallaudet Archives, the Gale Publication Guide, and the Alternative Press Index, and by word of mouth. Fifty-six (56) questionnaires were returned and analyzed; the usable questionnaires were linked to publications targeted to a general audience of people who live with disability.

*It is imperative for the reader to remember that the entire study is not addressed in this paper. The entire study: "Disability Magazine and Newsletter Editors: Perceptions of the Disability Press, Community, Advocacy, Mainstreaming, and Diversity" (1995) is available through the Microfilm Dissertation

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Carmen Manning-Miller's descriptive study of the disability press presented at the 1993 Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention was the first effort to document the existence of disability publications. Manning-Miller's efforts focused on the content of the publications she discussed. At that time, that study made no attempt to find out about the people responsible for the publications or their attitudes and perceptions about subjects e.g. civil rights issues for people with disabilities, debates about the existence of a disability community, debates about diversity and representation in the community. This research project took the next step and began to accomplish this goal.

Questionnaire Responses

The circulation figures for the 56 publications in this study range from fewer than one thousand to 30,000; with half of the publications indicating circulation figures of less than 5,000. For a frequency distribution of circulation figures, see the following table.

Service.

Publication Circulation Information

CIRCULATION	# OF PUBLICATIONS
*	5
less than 1,000	11
1,001 - 3,000	13
3,001 - 5,000	5
5,001 - 7,000	4
7,001 -10,000	4
10,001 -15,000	5
15,001 -20,000	4
20,001 -25,000	3
25,001 -30,000	2
Total:	56

* Missing Cases

The 56 disability publication editors responding to the researcher's questionnaire were as likely to be able-bodied as they were to be people with disabilities. In addition, approximately half of them had no previous journalism experience or training. As for the age, sex, racial/ethnic make up for editors participating in this study, they were typically White (82 percent), 30 - 60 years old (68 percent), and female (62 percent). This information is summarized in the table on the next page.

Summary of Age, Race, Sex Data for Editors

Age	19-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	*
	8	9	20	9	5	5
Sex		Female	Male		Both	*
		35	16		4	1
Race	White		Afr. Am.	As. Am.	Other	*
	44		3	1	4	4

*Missing Cases

This study also provided information about the targeted audiences and broad variety of disabilities that are addressed by these publications. See the table entitled "Disabilities Targeted by Publications" for a list of specific disabilities and their frequency among the publications that are represented in the study. The targeted audiences for these 56 publications were as likely to include legislators, parents, partners, and other "able bodied" folk as to include people with disabilities. This dual focus seemed to influence the tone of most editors' publications

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to be more conciliatory and less challenging. The distinction between tone, coverage, and editors' perceptions will be elaborated on further when the evolution of new coverage models is explained.

Disabilities Targeted by Publications

Disability	Frequency	Percent	
amputee	2	3.6	
blind/visually impair	2	3.6	
deaf/hh/h.i.	4	7.1	
developmental dis.	2	3.6	
learning disability	1	1.8	
polio/post polio	1	1.8	
different disability	1	1.8	
all disabilities	19	33.9	
blind and deaf	1	1.8	
deaf-blind	1	1.8	
mob. imp., diff.	1	1.8	
blind, c.p. different	1	1.8	
m.s., amputee, polio	1	1.8	
sp. cord, polio,m.s.	1	1.8	
Missing	18	32.1	
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Total	56	100.0	

One of the criteria for inclusion in this study was that the publication should be periodic, i.e. it should be produced at some regular interval. Therefore, a book about disability was not included in the study even though the author completed a questionnaire. Most of the publications described in this study were quarterly, however there were other publication schedules reported.

Publication Frequency and Subscription Rates

Twenty-two (39 percent) of the publications in this study were published quarterly. Thirteen disability publications in this study, or 23 percent of them, were published monthly and eight (14 percent) were published bimonthly. Two publications were published semi-annually; one was published biweekly and another one, annually. Nine publications, or 16 percent of the publications in this study had other publishing schedules. Most often "other publishing schedules" meant ten times a year or six times a year --but not bimonthly.

Twenty-eight or 50 percent of the publications in this study had annual subscription or organization membership fees which include copies of the publication. Fourteen (25 percent) of the publications in this study were free and ten publications had per copy or monthly subscription costs associated with them. The four remaining publication editors did not provide information about subscription or membership fees. Editors responding to the questions about subscription fees often included information about organizational membership fees instead of providing information about fees specifically for the publication. Consequently, I am unable to discern what, or if these publications had subscription fees. Subscription/membership fees were reported as ranging from zero--the majority of publications--to $275 per year.

Advertising Information

Thirty-one, or 55 percent, of the 56 publications in this study did not accept paid advertising in their publications. Twenty-three publications, or 41 percent of the 56 editors that responded to the disability publications questionnaire, indicated that they do accept paid advertising in their publications. There was no advertising information available for two publications in the study. Of those publications that accepted paid advertising, the most prevalent type of advertising was from companies selling adaptive technology and/or equipment to people with disabilities. Adaptive technology advertisements accounted for 52 percent of the advertisements mentioned by editors of disability publications. Seventeen percent, or four of the 23 editors that accepted advertisements mentioned advertisements from communication corporations, e.g. AT&T, MCI, Bell Atlantic, publishing companies, and computer companies. The same number of

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editors mentioned accepting advertisements that are geared toward the publication content. For example, some of the sports related publications accepted sports advertisements and the personal introduction publication accepts paid personal advertisements. Only three, or 13 percent, of the 23 editors acknowledged acceptance of paid advertising that was more general and unrelated to publication content or disability in general.

Disability Publication Models

This research project also produced evidence that disability publications fall into categories which provide further insight about how these editors related to certain concepts and issues present in some of the discourse about disability in America. John Clogston (1990) delineated types of disability coverage found in mainstream newspapers. Clogston described the coverage he found as either progressive/civil rights coverage or traditional/medical/pathological coverage.

Interestingly, all 12 of the disability publication editors interviewed perceived their publications as better at representing disability and people with disabilities than the mainstream media. Therefore, they could be said to view themselves as falling into Clogston's (1990) progressive/civil rights coverage category rather than Clogston's (1990) traditional/ medical/ pathological coverage category for covering disability. These self perceptions are not surprising, and are in fact consistent with common sense expectations about disability publications. The research data, however, indicates that the 12 editors participating in the interviews did not have monolithic values and perceptions about disability and related concepts.

Evolution of Disability Publication Models

Three models of coverage and editor perception were identified during the interview phase of this study. The three models are the Activist/Political, Assimilationist/ Mainstreaming, and Special Interest models of disability publication. The Activist/Political label grew out of the terms political and activist utilized by two interviewees in their descriptions of their publications. Assimilationist/ Mainstreaming and Special Interest are descriptive terms that tend to represent the goals of the editors of publications placed in this category. These three publication models emerged as the researcher mulled over interview transcripts from the phone interviews and side comments editors made. It was possible to discern patterns in editors' tone and perceptions from their responses to interview questions about the type of articles usually printed in their publications, editors' remarks about the existence of a "disability rights movement", "disability community", and their comments about "diversity" issues in American society, and to what extent editors framed disability concerns using terms like "community" and "diversity".

Activist/Political (Model I) publications are those that indicate by title, editor's questionnaire and/or interview responses, the intention to change society's attitudes about disability and to enhance the lives of audience members with disabilities. Following is an example of the type of interview response that led to the discovery of Model I.

> Well, first of all, I have always been on this whole thing as a social issue. I mean we don't do, we hardly ever do profiles. ...We talk about abuses, we try to discern the causes of different abuses, we try to see how they can be addressed...(BS, *Disability Rag)*

The criteria for Model I publications were that (a)the editor expressed intention to change society's attitudes about disability, (b) editor spoke about disability in civil rights and/or minority group terms, (c) editor was aware of diversity issues and made links between the activism of other groups and people with disabilities, and (d) editor at least minimally supported the concepts of a disability rights movement, disability community, and viewed their publication playing a role in these.

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Barbara Cheadle, editor of Future Reflections, a publication for parents of blind children provides another example of activist/political thinking when she said:

> We draw our inspiration, information and philosophy from the blind movement--not from agencies or the professionals. This is unique among parent organizations.

Model I

Activist/Political Publications

Publications in this model meet one or more of the following criteria: (a) editor expressed intention to change society's attitudes about disability; (b) editor spoke about disability in civil rights and/or minority group terms; (c) editor was aware of diversity issues and made links between the activism of other groups and people with disabilities; and (d) editor at least minimally supported the concepts of a disability rights movement, disability community, and viewed their publication playing a role in these.

Disability Rag and Resource
Future Reflections
MDAD News
PWD Update

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Assimilationist/Mainstreaming (Model II) publications are those that indicate by title, editor's questionnaire and/or interview responses, a desire to provide marketable and capable people with disabilities the opportunities to participate in employment, education/training or other activities available to American citizens; these publications often target non-disabled audiences. And following is one interview response that exemplifies this perspective.

> We had an article that he had written about using computers for educational purposes for people with disabilities. And there were several other articles in that grouping along the same lines:.... (ER, *The Forum*)

Model II criteria were that (a) the editors' questionnaire and/or interview responses indicated a desire to train (for employment) and market people with disabilities, (b) these editors primarily target non-disabled audiences, and (c) editors may or may not acknowledge diversity issues, a disability rights movement, and/or a disability community but are unlikely to perceive their publications as connected to these concepts. Fritz Rumpel, editor of In the Mainstream called himself as a "raging pragmatist" when the researcher asked him if he was part of the disability rights movement. He flatly said "no" and

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elaborated by saying,

> I consider myself an observer....Society should have a self-interest in any exclusion; the costs are much higher billions of dollars toward the deficit keeping people out of work...let's give them jobs so they can pay taxes like the rest of us...

Model II

Assimilationist/Mainstreaming Publications

Publications in this model meet one or more of the following criteria: (a)editors' questionnaire and/or interview responses indicated a desire to train (for employment) and market people with disabilities; (b) these editors primarily target non-disabled audiences; (c) editors may or may not acknowledge diversity issues, a disability rights movement, and/or a disability community but are unlikely to perceive their publications as connected to these concepts.

The Arc and the Dove
The Forum
In the Mainstream
UCP Progress

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Publications in the third category, Special Interest Publications (Model III) were targeted to audiences with specific interests, e.g. golfing, traveling, or dating. It is important to reiterate that these models are an outgrowth of the research and they were not preconceived models in which the researcher tried to place the publications or editors' perceptions of the publications. Here is another excerpt from one of the interviews that demonstrates the kind of material that qualifies a publication as belonging to Model III.

> The main articles are the national championships, the national senior championships. We have an ongoing article of technical updates....necessary information to the consumer about prosthetics, aid analysis,...and we hope that they will motivate and uplift the amputee that there is life after [the amputation] (BW, *The National Amputee Golfer*)

Finally, the criteria for Model III publications are (a) the editor describes the primary purpose of the publication as serving a specific interest of need, e.g. golfing for people with amputated limbs, (b) the disability factor is described as incidental, and (c)these publications are likely to accept

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advertisements related to the special interest category, e.g. traveling or dating.

Model III

Special Interest Publications

The publication in this model met one or more of the following criteria: (a) the editor describes the primary purpose of the publication as serving a specific interest or need, e.g. golfing for people with amputated limbs; (b) the disability factor is described as incidental; (c) likely to accept advertisements related to the special interest category, i.e. golfing, travel, dating.

The National Amputee Golfer

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Conclusions

The research reported in this paper identified a growing list of disability publications in the United States. Specifically, this research identified 131 publications for people with disabilities (116 more publications than the 15 identified in the Manning-Miller study). The list was not exhaustive in 1994/1995 and it is very likely that other researchers/scholars have since identified more publications targeted to people with disabilities.

Four of the 12 (one third) editors' responses fell into Model I and Model II each; one into Model III; and three could not be categorized based on the answers they provided.

Publications for people with disabilities are an important source of information for people with disabilities, and others interested in disability issues. Most importantly, these publications provide spaces where the communication processes among people interested in disability issues take place. Exchange of information and ongoing dialogue is fundamental to general American ideals of democracy and free speech, but this exchange and dialogue is imperative for people with disabilities (and other non-mainstream groups) as they continue to forge a group identity.

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt and His Disability: The _Chicago_ _Tribune_ and the 1936 Election

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt and His Disability:
The *Chicago Tribune* and the 1936 Election

Throughout the years of his presidency, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's disability, the paralysis brought upon by polio, was not so much concealed from the public as it was kept private. Roosevelt's intent was, it seems, not to deceive, but to treat a handicap as something that need not detract from a person's power, talent, and dignity. With the help of his press secretary, Stephen Early, the Secret Service, and the cooperation of the Washington press corps, President Roosevelt was able to deliberately manage the visual images, both the still photos and the newsreel clips, that were transmitted to the nation. All images of weakness were avoided as he realized they could be detrimental to his political career. 1

The sophistication of the White House effort, together with the photographers' respect for Roosevelt, ensured that the President was almost never photographed in his wheelchair, with his braces, or in a posture of pain or helplessness. In fact, if a rookie or outsider tried to snap a picture of the President in an unacceptable pose, veteran photographers inevitably found a way to interfere. There were very few loopholes in the system Roosevelt constructed, with the help of the press corps, to shroud his condition.[2]

This leads, then, to an interesting question. If the press corps left Roosevelt's disability out of their pictures, did news stories in print follow this same route of concealment? Or did the conservative slant of an editor or publisher reveal itself in negative references about Roosevelt's paralysis, comments easily interjected into news stories about his movements on the campaign trail?

The answer to this question may reside in examining the differences in news coverage between two newspapers in the 1936 Roosevelt - Landon presidential election. Editorials published in the autumn of 1936 clarified each paper's position: The Chicago Tribune was avowedly opposed to Franklin Roosevelt and The New York Times was his clear proponent. Specifically at issue is the treatment of Roosevelt's affliction. His disability could have been used to make him seem weak and ineffective, an unfit Commander in

Chief. Questions about his physical strength could have led, by association, to questions about strength of character and his ability to lead a powerful and troubled nation. Or, and this was also possible, perhaps his paralysis could have been used to garner sympathy and compassion.

The question under consideration is whether Roosevelt's physical condition was manipulated by either or both of the two newspapers in the context of news stories. As sympathy ill becomes a head of state, it might be presumed that The New York Times ignored Roosevelt's handicap, and indeed it did. On the other hand, given the Tribune's hatred of Roosevelt, which will be documented later in this paper, references to the President's handicap might be expected to appear in news stories; the owner and publisher of the Tribune, Robert McCormick, did not lose many opportunities to vent his virulence against Roosevelt and the New Deal. Given the way the White House managed news coverage, it would have been difficult to reference his disability via photojournalism, but easy to accomplish through descriptive text.

There were precedents for such copy. Magazines as venerable as the Saturday Evening Post did take advantage of Roosevelt's handicap and chose to mention it in terms of weakness and inadequacy. In its 11 June 1932 issue, the Post quotes Alfred E. Smith, four-term governor of New York and a rival to Roosevelt, as saying that the presidency required "a man of great vigor and bodily strength to stand the physical strain of it (the campaign)." 3 Smith, of course, was not part of the media, but his remark did have a place in the national dialogue if it appeared in the Post. Also in its 2 January 1933 issue, Time magazine made negative references to Roosevelt's condition. 4

In the same vein, Leonard Fowler, editor of a small Illinois newspaper, The Fox Valley Mirror, resorted to similar criticism. Fowler wrote, "a physical cripple is inclined to become an emotional and spiritual cripple." 5 The extreme end of the political spectrum did not hesitate to incorporate within its criticism allusions to Roosevelt's paralysis. In one of his Interquadrangular articles, George Gundelfinger said that America was a humanitarian country that "believes in doing all it can for cripples -- but its compassion need not go quite so far as to make them President of the United States." 6 The most unscrupulous articles referred to Roosevelt's affliction and then hinted at impotence and/or incontinence. 7

The methodology in checking for any allusions to Roosevelt's paralysis focused on a content analysis that entailed a day-by-day scrutiny of the campaign stories printed in both the Chicago Tribune and The New York Times from 3 October 1936 to election day, 3 November 1936. An examination of secondary sources helped form a context for this era in terms of the political climate, mass media outlets in general, and the editorial position of the Chicago Tribune. The 1936 election furnished useful material for analysis because it was a campaign that generated much controversy but was relatively untouched by other major factors such as the despair of 1932, the expectation of America's entry into World War II in 1940, or the forecasted end of the War and Roosevelt's failing health in 1944.

In order to understand print journalism in 1936, there are some aspects that should not be overlooked. The first relevant point is the important place that the newspaper occupied in American life, particularly in the news coverage that was accessible to working class Americans.

It is easy to forget, given the wealth of present media outlets, that in 1936 the situation was much more restricted. Not only did this period precede television, but at that time neither the radio nor the weekly news magazine had a firm foothold in news coverage. Although Time magazine started in the early 1920s, its only competitor was Newsweek, which had a substantially lower circulation. Life, the popular magazine of photojournalism, was first published in November of 1936; Look magazine, established in the wake of Life by the Cowles family of Des Moines, Iowa, was not published until January of 1937. 8

The importance of newspaper news is underscored by the strictures that for a time curtailed radio news. By the early 1930's, radio was a popular form of entertainment. During that same period it also began to build its news coverage from short bulletins that mimicked print journalism to talk shows and panel discussions that featured politicians and artists. News commentaries were frequently aired and won steady audiences. It was, however, directly because of this growth and popularity that radio suffered some setbacks in news coverage. Because of the success of radio news broadcasts, newspaper editors and publishers retaliated in fear and began a press-radio war that lasted from 1931 to 1934. 9

Such was the power of press owners and publishers that they banded together and were successful in shutting out the networks from obtaining wire-service copy. The Associated Press, an organization dominated and led by newspaper publishers, led the battle against radio news. In 1931, the American Newspapers Publishers Association (ANPA) put prohibitions on broadcast news. Eventually, these prohibitions were circumvented by NBC and CBS, both of which developed their own news-gathering departments. A truce was effected in 1933 and then violated by broadcasters in 1934 when they found relief from a new wire service, Transervice Press. 10

Thereafter, radio's place in news broadcasting was secured, at least through the rest of the 1930s and the 1940s. Its growth as a news medium had, however, been interrupted and radio had not yet maximized its potential in the 1936 election.

It is, however, interesting to note that while radio did not rival newspapers in regard to disseminating news, it was an outlet that President Roosevelt used to advantage even before his presidential candidacy. He began his "Fireside Chats" during his first term in office and in 1932 delivered his acceptance speech to the Democratic convention on radio. His voice --strong, comforting, and reassuring -- was well suited to the medium. Even during his first term in office, Roosevelt began to see that he could use radio to bypass the conservative press and directly contact the American people. 11

Not only did radio lend itself well to Roosevelt's personal style, but the medium was cooperative. Radio was happy to accommodate the President for two reasons: first, to avenge the print press that had tried to limit its traffic with wire services; and second, to demonstrate its cooperation to the Federal Communication Commission, which had the power to regulate the air waves. Still, Roosevelt's use of radio was limited until after the 1936 election when he decided to punish the press for its overwhelming support of Landon; during the 1936 election, radio was less of a force than it was a short time later. 12

Another aspect of radio that might have seemed to offer news coverage was the March of Time: however, this radio program only approximated news coverage as it was a pseudo-documentary that recreated and dramatized current events using a cast of actors. It was popular and ran from 1931 to 1945, but the audience for the most part understood that it primarily offered entertainment rather than information. 13

Although it resembled real news coverage, the March of Time newsreel was, in fact, a spin-off of the radio program and was, in varying degrees, a docudrama. The ten-minute "news" capsules that accompanied popular movies were not entirely factual although they did deal with controversial topics. The newsreels were an important stepping stone in motion picture journalism; still, they were suspect because they included inauthentic situations and footage. A documentary theorist, A. William Bluem, said that the March of Time newsreel "stretched the limits of journalism by implicitly arguing that the picture as well as the word was, after all, only symbolic of reality." 14 The footage was meant to reflect reality faithfully, according to the reporter's conscience, but a reproduction by its very nature is less than genuine. Again, this medium differed from print journalism, which may have slanted material but did not usually alter it.

Other sources that might seem, from a contemporary point of view, to have offered reliable news coverage were weekly magazines. Such, however, was not the case in 1936. The synthesized news magazine was not a terribly common or popular media outlet in 1936. Although Time magazine first appeared in March of 1923, it remained a medium for a particular sector of society. Its brisk and sarcastic tone was directed toward an upper-middle class male audience, and its readership was predictable. A 1931 survey taken in Appleton, Wisconsin demonstrated that in that community, Time's readership had an annual salary that was nearly twice the national average. 15

Another aspect of the print media that can not be excluded from the contextual situation is the bitterness that the owners and managers of newspapers felt toward Franklin Roosevelt. It was not only his ideology that they found fault with, but the way that particular acts of legislation endorsed or authored by his administration affected the newspaper industry. In 1933 the American Newspapers Publishers Association directly addressed Congress in opposing the National Recovery Act, which outlined codes of competition for all industries, including the press. The code governed child-labor practices, limits on the work week, and the right of labor to organize and bargain. As the Newspaper Guild had been organized in 1933 under the direction of Heywood Broun, and its power was growing, newspaper owners and editors were further threatened by the legislation that not only protected the Guild but indirectly contributed to the expense of running a newspaper.[16]

Taking into account these various factors, what ultimately emerges is the complex role of the media in the 1936 election. The first consideration is the political stance of the daily newspapers. Roosevelt said that about 85 percent of the press opposed his re-election in 1936. Other estimates are closer to 70 percent. At any rate, the press overwhelmingly favored Landon over Roosevelt and could express its approval in several ways including editorials, editorial cartoons, and columns of interpretation and analysis, which were becoming increasingly popular in that decade. Furthermore, a newspaper could, if it chose, slant news coverage to further its editorial ends.

For his part, Roosevelt did what he could to acquire good press coverage. He fostered amicable relations with journalists. Through his tenure in office, Roosevelt was on good terms with the working reporters, those who drank black coffee and ordered whiskey. His affable personality was well-suited to exchanges with reporters who enjoyed his wit, the information he so articulately and succinctly conveyed, and the solicitousness he expressed toward the regulars. In his first term alone he held 340 press conferences, which came to be considered "the greatest regular show in Washington." 17 Still, even if Roosevelt was on good terms with the Washington press corps, those reporters had to submit their copy to editors who were in turn responsible to publishers. Publishers retained much power over their newspapers.

Publishers were in an enviable position; people relied on newspapers for their daily news because they had no equal in terms of credibility, availability and thoroughness. Furthermore, in the absence of television, and the circumscribed role of radio, news reels, and magazines, newspapers could control not only a great flow of news coverage, but the press could also manipulate the creation of visual and audio images through word choice and the selection of details.

Because people had only limited alternate sources to rely on for visual or audio accounts of current events, one of newspapers' tasks, to a degree that has no parallel today in the print media, was to recreate the day's events through sense impressions. This facet of news management should not be overlooked when dealing with definitive and contrasting images of Franklin Roosevelt. That is, he could have been portrayed as a weak and crippled man, or as a strong, virile leader to be feared and loathed. Certainly a publisher who despised Roosevelt, as many did, had these choices at his disposal through the power of the printed word.

Since the question under consideration is how one conservative newspaper, the Chicago Tribune, handled its coverage of Roosevelt and whether or not Roosevelt's paralysis was used to create images of weakness, it is important to understand some aspects of the newspaper and its owner/publisher, Colonel Robert McCormick.

McCormick had been friendly with Roosevelt -- they had been school friends at Groton -- before and shortly after the 1932 election. Curiously enough, even though Roosevelt had begun discussing the policies he would pursue as president, McCormick did not oppose him in 1932, believing that both Roosevelt and Hoover were middle-of-the-road politicians devoted to the status quo. When that turned out not to be the case, McCormick became an early critic of New Deal policies. Then, when the National Recovery Act threatened and in fact eventually did regulate aspects of the newspaper business, McCormick became outspoken in his criticism of Roosevelt and the New Deal. Soon he became glaringly negative and the Tribune began to link Roosevelt to bolshevism and communism. Cabinet members were viciously criticized as well. Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace was compared to Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler. 18

McCormick's reputation as a reactionary was reputedly well-deserved. His interaction with the American Newspapers Publishers Association to coordinate opposition to the NRA, his support of the America First Committee, and his anti-labor and collective bargaining stances all contributed to his conservative, in fact, reactionary reputation. By 1936, "Colonel McCormick had won recognition as the leading reactionary publisher of the Middle West." 19

Biographer Joseph Gies points out that McCormick just narrowly missed the national championship, losing out to Randolph Hearst, who had turned against Roosevelt even more bitterly. In the intensity of hatred Hearst and McCormick felt toward Roosevelt, they were in step with the majority of their fellow publishers, most of whom were adamant in their criticism and vociferous in voicing it. 20

Given the fact that many papers bitterly opposed Roosevelt's reelection, how did a negative editorial position affect news coverage in terms of the President's image? Did the newspapers take advantage of the unfavorable images that could have been evoked by references to polio and paralysis?

An analysis of the October, 1936 campaign stories in both The New York Times and the Chicago Tribune yields some observations.

While the Chicago Tribune was an avowed enemy of

Franklin Roosevelt, his disability was not mentioned in the campaign stories in the month that preceded the 1936 election. Nor did the Tribune make any reference to Roosevelt's paralysis in even an oblique fashion. Allusions to his being assisted to a platform, which he was, or carried from his car, which was also so, did not materialize. Furthermore, no references were made to the equipment associated with the President's affliction, either the wheelchair he used or the leg braces he wore. The only phrase used that might or might not have referred to his condition was that he was "escorted" to the platform. The word, however, is fairly neutral in meaning and could be used to mean that a person walked up to the platform with his supporters.

The New York Times, which on 1 October 1936, ran an editorial endorsing Roosevelt's re-election, also used the word "escorted" in its news stories, referring to Roosevelt's movement from one place to another. 21 The Times, predictably, did not call attention to Roosevelt's affliction.

While the Tribune's policy in this regard was less predictable, it, too, refrained from indirect references to Roosevelt's disability amd avoided words that had connotations of illness, weakness or fatigue. Any such references were used sparingly and in the same situations as

The New York Times, references to the President returning home after a long campaign swing. The Tribune made few, and appropriate, references to the President sleeping or resting, often taking a form similar to the innocuous comment it published on 18 October, "President Roosevelt arrived here tonight at 10:45 (E.S.T.) to spend a day at his home, resting up from a week and a half of campaigning." 22

The Times actually printed more of such references to fatigue, referring to FDR's taking a day of much needed relaxation, or the President's train stopping at a quiet town for a night's sleep. For example, on 3 October, the Times wrote, "A tired but unusually cheerful President returned to his home here tonight for a week-end of partial relaxation." 23 Given the Times' editorial support, perhaps such details demonstrated a kindliness toward the candidate.

Bypassing a likely strategy of emphasizing Roosevelt's weakness, the Tribune took a different tack. It focused on Roosevelt's strength, instead of weakness. An explicit explanation for this approach is illusive --perhaps with the deaths of the principals none exists -- but a conclusion can be approached indirectly. Given the Tribune's editorial stance, it seems fair to theorize that the purpose of its rhetoric was to demonize Roosevelt. Weakness is pathetic, but strength is frightening. It was more in keeping with the Tribune's point of view that Franklin Roosevelt, as a staunch supporter of organized labor, government regulation, and federal spending, was a tyrant who had to be stopped. Making him appear pathetic would not further the Tribune's ends.

The Tribune demonized Roosevelt through news stories in three main ways: first, by using words and phrases of power and unpleasantness in describing him; second, by associating his candidacy with others it deemed devils including labor officials, called labor bosses, and leaders of the Democratic party, also called bosses or party bosses; and third, by emphasizing his wealth, another dimension of power.

The Tribune used allusions to power and aggression on a daily basis during the month preceding the 1936 election; the same words or their synonyms were repeated day after day. On 11 October, for example, the Tribune said in a campaign story unexceptional from other campaign stories, that in addressing a crowd Roosevelt "used the full fury of his oratorical talents." 24 On 13 October, the Tribune wrote, "President Roosevelt attained a new high in vitriolic oratory today." 25 The next day's story was little different; the Tribune called the President's train stop "a political invasion of Kansas." 26 Most stories were peppered with aggressive verbs such as shouted, attacked, and invaded. 27

In the Tribune, Roosevelt's character was constantly linked to anger and vehemence. On 11 October, he "put a wealth of scorn (into his speech)," "used a tone of utmost bitterness," and "relieved himself of some bitter words." 28 On 13 October, his voice was "almost querulous." 29 Five days later, on 18 October, the Tribune said the President "indulged in a few of the pugnacious phrases (common to his campaign)." 30

The other image the Tribune developed was that of the President as a thug. His supporters were usually labeled partisans, or minions badgered by some labor or government official into attending a rally or parade. Roosevelt's camp was filled with "bosses" instead of friends or allies. 31 The over-all impression in the news stories was that of illicit control and corruption. On 3 October, "It was whispered in awed tones by Boss Hague's followers," and again on that same day, "Mayor Frank Hague, Democratic political boss of Jersey City, grasped the opportunity to put on a show . . . a spectacular exhibition of political efficiency." 32

Organized labor was associated with unsavory tactics in manipulating votes as seen in this 6 October excerpt, "Green (William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor) gayly tossed an approximate total of 7,200,000 votes into the President's lap." 33 Again, such references were used almost on a daily basis and are too numerous to list.

The third tactic that the Tribune used was accentuating Roosevelt's financial position which, once again, contributed to an image of undue power and wealth. This was particularly true at a time when the nation was still recovering from the Great Depression that had left millions poor and many destitute. On 4 October 1936, the Tribune described Roosevelt's visit to his home at Hyde Park, "For two hours this afternoon, President Roosevelt and members of his family disported themselves on the capacious acres of his Hudson river estate before a battery of news reel cameras . . . to show how the President in the role of a landed squire, passes a typical day in the country." 34 The printed words, once again, created an image that connoted corruption and power.

On the other hand, the New York Times tended to describe Roosevelt positively, projecting an image of him as popular, witty, and kindly. For instance, on 3 October, Roosevelt was said to be "unusually cheerful," as well as possessing "special warmth," and "buoyant spirits." 35 On 28 October, the Times said the President evinced a "cheery good humor" and an attitude marked by "frequent jocular remarks." 36 Alluding to Roosevelt's popularity, an article printed on 15 October notes that, "The President made his speech before 26,00 persons who packed the Chicago Stadium, while uncounted thousands jammed the streets around the stadium." 37

The rhetoric in the Chicago Tribune and The New York Times is not without significance. A close and comparative reading of campaign stories during October of 1936 points to some conclusions. The first and obvious one is that a paper's editorial position was, at least in the presidential election of 1936, demonstrably present in its news stories. This held true for both the Tribune and the Times.

Relevant literature in the field confirms this. Joseph Gies writes that, "Through 1934, the Tribune's Washington coverage turned even more noticeably anti-Roosevelt than the editorials." 38 He implies that this trend continued into and past 1936. Folkerts and Teeter state that "McCormick earned his reputation as a reactionary with his obviously biased coverage of Roosevelt's reelection campaigns." 39 A 1936 poll of Washington reporters voted the Tribune as a runner-up to the Hearst newspapers as being, "the least fair and reliable." 40

But if news stories in 1936 were influenced by a paper's editorial slant, why didn't the Chicago Tribune, a newspaper that had no qualms about comparing Roosevelt to Hitler, make use of any ammunition at its disposal, including his disability?

As suggested earlier, it was probably more advantageous to the Tribune's goals to demonize Roosevelt rather than make him look infirm. However, three other reasons suggest themselves. Perhaps although Colonel McCormick hated Roosevelt, he would not go so far as to use Roosevelt's affliction against him. Another possibility is that perhaps the _Tribune_ feared retaliation in the form of news withheld from the regular channels. Neither theory seems workable: McCormick was immoderate in his hatred; furthermore, the _Tribune_ had already done enough to incur the wrath of the White House, if vengeance had been at stake.

Third and last, perhaps the _Tribune_ feared reprisals from angry readers who might find such material offensive. While this was possible and did, in fact, seem to stop _Time_ magazine from making such allusions, secondary sources suggest that it was unlikely that a man as vehement as Colonel McCormick was sensitive to readers' reprisals. It is helpful to remember that this was the editor who in the spring of 1936 began running a slogan above his editorial page masthead that read, "You have only 217 days left to save your country. What are you doing to save it?" 41 He ran this question, varying the days left, of course, for several weeks. McCormick also instructed his telephone operators to answer the phone with this same query. Colonel McCormick was not a moderate man.

The first supposition, then, reasserts itself: demonizing Roosevelt fit the _Tribune's_ purposes. Both direct and indirect references to Roosevelt's condition were probably judged counter-productive to the _Tribune's_ editorial position. One amendment, however, might be added to this general premise, and that is that although both direct and indirect allusions to the President's disability were omitted, oblique references to Roosevelt's condition may nonetheless have been included in the news copy, though so subtly as to be scarcely perceptible. In the realm of suggestion and association, bitterness and paralysis are often perceived as linked. A person is thought to be embittered by infirmity, made nasty by tribulation. The Tribune's allusions, then, to Roosevelt as vitriolic or angry may have functioned after all as signals of Roosevelt's paralysis. In that way, the images may have served a double purpose, painting the man as both loathsome and infirm. There is no telling, really, from this distance, if such had been the intent, but it may, just the same, have produced that effect.

In terms of future research, President Roosevelt's disability and the media's coverage of it offer many areas of study, including an investigation of the manner in which other reactionary newspapers handled his paralysis. It would be particularly interesting to examine some of the Hearst publications. In a slightly different vein, Roosevelt's management of his visual image could be examined in detail, encompassing not only the poses he allowed, but his facial expressions, choice of clothes, and the use of various props such as cars, his dog, Fala, and his trademark: the long and elegant cigarette holder, which as a symbol, has had no parallel in American politics.

FOOTNOTES

1. Betty Houchin Winfield, "F.D.R's Pictorial Image, Rules and Boundaries," Journalism History 5:4 (Winter 1978-1979): 110-111.

2. Winfield, 110-111.

3. Alfred E. Smith, "Common Sense in Convention and Campaigning," Saturday Evening Post (June 11, 1932): 74.

4. As found in Winfield, 113.

5. George Wolfskill and John A. Hudson, All but the People: Franklin D. Roosevelt and His Critics, 1933-1939 (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1969), 13.

6. Wolfskill and Hudson, 13.

7. Wolfskill and Hudson, 13.

8. Jean Folkerts and Dwight L. Teeter, Jr., Voices of a Nation: A History of Media in the United States (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 410-417.

9. Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 415-418.

10. Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 416-418.

11. Michael Emery and Edwin Emery. The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media, Sixth Edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 355.

12. Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 424-425.

13. Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 418.

14. As quoted in Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 419.

15. Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 417, 427-428.

16. Folkerts and Teeter, Jr., 435-437.

17. Emery and Emery, 355.

18. Joseph Gies, The Colonel of Chicago (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), 129.

19. Gies, 132.

20. Gies, 132.

21. Charles W. Hurd, "President Is Home, Tired But Cheery," *The New York Times* (October 3, 1936), 3.

22. Willard Edwards, "President Ends 'Barnstorming' Trip in New York State," *Chicago Tribune* (October 18, 1936), 6.

23. Hurd, 3.

24. Willard Edwards, "Roosevelt Bids For Farm Vote in G.O.P. Attack," *Chicago Tribune* (October 11, 1936), 1,4.

25. Willard Edwards, "President Raps G.O.P. Criticism Of His Spending," *Chicago Tribune* (October 13, 1936), 1.

26. "Party Parade Will Precede Stadium Talk," *Chicago Tribune* (October 14, 1936), 6.

27. Edwards, "President Raps G.O.P. Criticism Of His Spending," 1.

28. Edwards, "Roosevelt Bids For Farm Vote in G.O.P. Attack," 1.

29. Edwards, "President Raps G.O.P. Criticism Of His Spending," 6.

30. Edwards, "President Ends 'Barnstorming' Trip in New York State, 6.

31. Willard Edwards, "$1,000 Show Is Given In Jersey For Roosevelt," *Chicago Tribune* (October 3, 1936), 10.

32. Edwards, "$1,000 Show Is Given In Jersey For Roosevelt," 10.

33. Willard Edwards, "Roosevelt Adds Michigan Talks To His Campaign," *Chicago Tribune* (October 6, 1936), 9.

34. Willard Edwards, "Roosevelt As Landed Squire Acts For Talkie," *Chicago Tribune* (October 4, 1936), 7.

35. Hurd, 3.

36. "Roosevelt Avoids Expression on NRA," *The New York Times*, (October 28, 1936), 18.

37. "Six Stops Made in Illinois," The New York Times, (October 15, 1936), 23.

38. Gies, 129.

39. Folkerts and Teeter, 436.

40. Gies, 135.

41. Gies, 134.

FDR: image in 1936 election

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A Search for Indications of Disability Culture in Magazines Marketed to the Disability Community

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to report results of a study that sought to identify subjects or subject matter that could be construed as indicators of a specific or unique disability culture. As its methodology the study employed a preliminary content analysis of publications that seek as their readership a general audience of people with disabilities. Results provide evidence of generally accepted prerequisites of culture, such as tools and technology, a shared value system in support of the individual with a disability, and an emphasis on events and information that promote empowerment and interaction within the disability community.

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A Search for
Indications of Disability Culture
in Magazines Marketed to the Disability Community

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Introduction

A sense of unity among persons with disabilities has become more prominent in recent years (Scotch, 1993, p. 238), and has gained momentum since enactment of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990. Recently some of the more assertive individuals and organizations in the disability community have emphasized the unique aspects of the disability experience and hinted at a concept of "disability culture."

The concept of "disability culture" is distinct from examination a larger culture's attitude toward disability or the individual with a disability, an approach that has been examined from the perspective of mass media (Nelson, 1994), sociology (Ingstad and White, 1995; Hanks and Poplin, 1990), history (Irvin, 1997), and medical communication (Bogdan, Brown and Foster, 1992), as well as numerous medical and rehabilitation studies. Rather, identification of disability as a determining factor for membership in a distinct culture --or perhaps more accurately a subculture--has developed out of a background including philosophies and experiences of the deaf community, which has a history of describing itself as a unique culture, and self-determination drives such as the Independent Living movement founded in Berkley as an alternative to institutionalized care of persons with disabilities. In addition, disability culture as a separate minority phenomena finds some theoretical foundations in the oppression theories of Paolo Freire.

However, the concept of "disability culture" has emerged so recently that its dimensions remain relatively unexplored. Scotch (1990) notes "it may be more accurate to characterize people with disabilities as members of a social category rather than as an identifiable social or political group" (p. 239). Irvin (1997) observes that women, blacks, gays and lesbians have united behind their group status, whereas people with disabilities have not. "All of these people have their own pride movements. We barely do," she comments (p. 3). On the other hand, an Institute on Disability Culture in Las Cruces, New Mexico, "specializes in exploring the history, ideology, and diverse expressions of our culture," and co-founder Steven Brown notes, "We share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature and other expressions of our lives, our culture, infused from our experience of disability." (Brown, 1997)

Has an identifiable, unique disability culture now emerged? The purpose of this paper is to report results of a study that sought to identify subjects or subject matter that could be construed as indicators of a specific or unique disability culture. As its methodology the study employed a preliminary content analysis of publications that seek as their readership people with disabilities.

Survey of literature

Exploration to identify the boundaries of a culture of disability is made difficult at a fundamental level because borders are ill-defined around even the term "culture." Sociologists Applebaum and Chambliss (1995) say

> culture constitutes the materials out of which we construct our identities and our perceptions of the world. It comprises the lens through which we view the world, as well as the materials by which we might alter that lens and thereby the world itself.(p. 54)

They further define culture as "all the beliefs, behaviors and products common to members of a particular group" (p. 54), and include language, goods made and consumed, membership in organizations and tools and technology as elements of a culture.

Henslin (1995) emphasizes the arbitrary nature of culture, and observes that larger cultures break into subcultures. "Each subculture has a distinctive way of looking at life," he says (p. 44), and he notes for example that ethnic groups may form subcultures that "pride themselves on how they differ from the dominant culture" (p. 44). In addition, he observes that some groups--countercultures--form values in opposition to the dominant culture, and may constitute a perceived threat to the dominant group.

Friere (1970, 1985) has developed a body of theory relative to this concept of subcultures as a threat to dominant groups. In his studies of the interactions of dominant cultures with indigenous cultures, he observes educational and political action which he defines as "cultural invasion." He urges an alternative approach which emphasizes dialogue and synthesis of cultural groups:

> It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world...reflects their situation in the world.
>
> Often, educators and politicians speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the concrete situation of the men they address. (p. 85)

Disability rights advocates have adopted Freire's education theories because they legitimize and empower the experiences of individuals in dominated groups. Notes Giroux (1985),

> Friere argues for a notion of cultural power that takes as its starting point the social and historical particularities, the problems, the sufferings, visions, acts of resistance, that constitute the cultural forms of subordinate groups. . .This means making these

> experiences in their public and private forms the object of debate and confirmation. (p. xxi)

Among people described as having disabilities, the deaf and people with hearing impairment have established a firm foundation for status as a distinct culture. Carver (1991) is unequivocal in defining a separation between the hearing and the deaf characterized by, among other elements, American Sign Language (ASL). This clear separation of experience, he says, establishes a Deaf culture (signified by a capital D). "In order to begin to understand such things, the person must live in this culture and speak the language of this culture," he notes. (p. 1)

Carver further distinguishes Deaf culture from hearing systems in ways that recall Friere's concepts of a dominant group's fear of the dominated: "Many are feeling threatened by the rise of deaf culture," he observes. (p.2)

Padden and Humphries (1988) further refine the concept of Deaf Culture as they examine life experience with Deaf as a central point, not from the medical condition of absence or loss of hearing. They observe that Deaf Culture already has its basis in both a system of unique language (ASL) and in the "unique pattern of cultural transmission" via both families and residential schools for the deaf. "A large population, established patterns of cultural transmission, and a common language: these are all basic ingredients for a rich and inventive culture," they observe. (p. 9)

However, Padden and Humphries also impose limits within Deaf Culture. They note differences between the experience of those with congenital hearing loss, those whose hearing became impaired later in life, and those with partial hearing impairment, or the "hard of hearing," offering an ideological split between those who "think hearing," i.e. those who prefer to "think and act like a hearing person" (p. 53) and those for whom Deaf is a central position, not the absence of a preferred position. In this view, "'disabled' is a label that historically has not belonged to Deaf people," they note. (p. 44)

Modern disability activism shares a similar outlook, according to Oliver (1996), who observes that the "growing disability movement has turned away from the professionally dominated top down solutions provided by able-bodied experts." (p. 123) He sees in the modern disability movement a "collective empowerment" illustrated by new models of disability, as well as "development of a disability culture and the public affirmation of this through the disability arts movement." (p. 152) Such cultural expression, he says, "provide(s) a challenge to the stigmatization of difference in its insistence that disability is a cause for celebration." (p. 157)

Irvin (1997), in her discussion of the meaning of a "cure" for disability relative to Franklin Roosevelt at Warm Springs, emphasizes a sense of community that has many aspects of "culture." Roosevelt, according to Irvin, "had found camaraderie with his fellows with polio, and he understood how that sense of community helped one. Nondisabled people didn't see that." She continues:

> Warm Springs had at one time been "home" to me, too. The kids I grew up with here, they were like me. They were my family, they were my "brothers and sisters." . . .When my parents came to visit or to take me home, I didn't feel as though I'd belonged to them anymore. People who walked--they were the Strangers. (p. 4)

Robertson (1994) discusses a movement away from a medical model of disability toward a sociopolitical model, with its members constituting a distinct minority group. "This emerging culture is marked by the development of arts and literature reflecting the disability experience, and by a unique set of values" including pride and independence, she says. (p.5)

Method

Although the literature points clearly to the emergence of a disability culture, the concept remains ill-defined. The research reported here sought evidence of its contours through an analysis of magazines that seek as their readership the person with a disability.

Most magazines must serve their readership in order to survive. They provide this service by offering content that appeals to a specific audience segment; content which has no relationship to the life experience of the audience would be useless. Therefore the content selected for publication by magazine editors must be a good representation of the subject matter that comprises the culture--or subculture--served by the publication.

This study examined the content of three magazines: *Accent on Living*, *Mainstream* and *Paraplegia News*. These magazines were chosen because they publish content that is aimed toward a general broad audience of people with disabilities. Nelson (1996) says *Paraplegia News* "has a circulation of almost 30,000 and serves anyone with a mobility requirement" (p. 6), while "*Mainstream* and *Accent on Living* have aimed at active, interested general audiences who may have some disability, but whose lives are not defined by that disability" (p. 13). Alternatively, publications such as *Exceptional Parent*, *Disabled Outdoors Magazine*, or *Computer Disability News* were not chosen because of their narrow subject matter focus.

To identify the content of the publications, the study followed a methodology adopted by Westfall (1994), who seeks patterns in magazine content by examining, among other aspects, the mix and range of subjects in magazines. According to Westfall, the subjects--or topic categories--need not be "textbook-approved categories," but may be devised to fit the magazine under study. Within a broad range, therefore, subject matter in magazines serving even the same general audience can vary considerably from magazine to magazine.

Predominant subject matter covered in the magazines examined for this study was determined by charting their content, as suggested by Westfall. Westfall recommends review of at least two issues of magazines to be analyzed; this study reviewed three issues of each magazine, selected from different seasons across several recent years. The unit of analysis was the story or article, which was defined as a text unit of at least one paragraph that included its own headline. The number of stories identified in each category was counted, totaled and charted as indicated in Figures 1-3. Because the analysis was conducted by only one person (the author), intercoder reliability measures were inapplicable.

Results

One advantage of Westfall's magazine content methodology is that it allows for wide variation in subject range, rather than forcing conformity to pre-defined subject areas. As Nelson (1996) observes, the magazines analyzed here all have general audiences, but as Westfall notes, "all magazines have things they will and will not do" (p. 71). This analysis showed considerable difference in frequently visited subjects, and subjects not included, in each of the three publications.

Paraplegia News is the largest (and oldest) of the three magazines reviewed, with an average of about 100 pages in each issue analyzed. A total of 206 individual stories

Figure 1.

Paraplegia News content

Subject matter by number of stories

Source: January, March, June 1996 issues

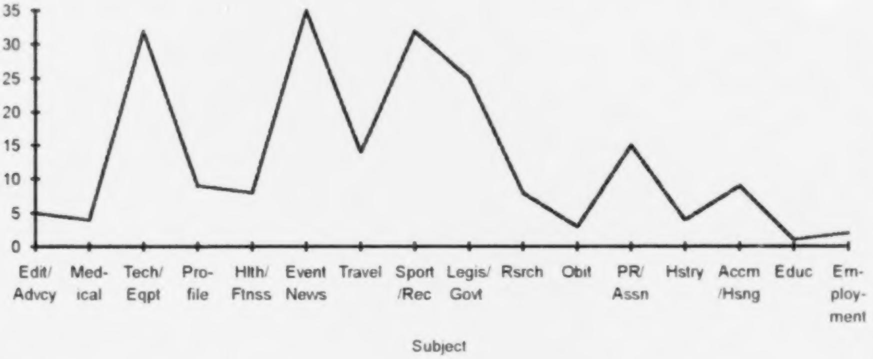

Figure 2.

Accent on Living content

Subject matter by number of stories

Source: Summer, 1991; Spring, 1992; Winter 1993 issues

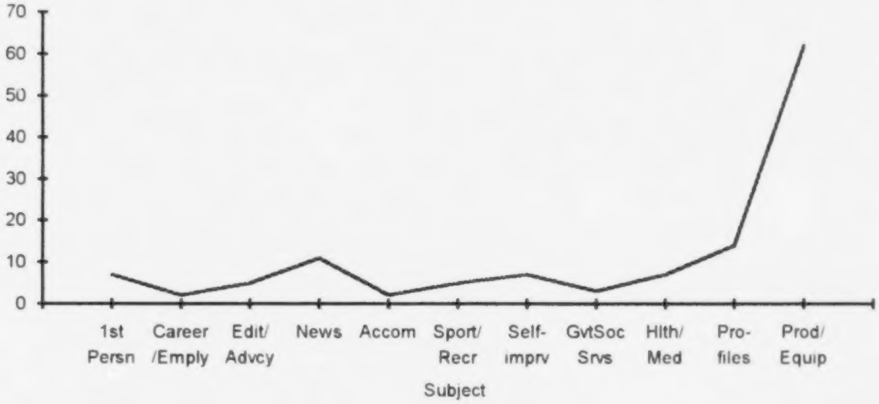

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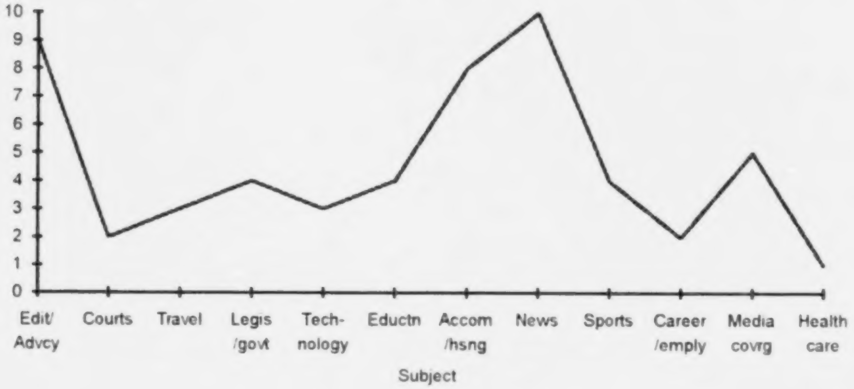
Figure 3.

Mainstream content

Subject matter by number of stories

Source: April, 1996; October, 1996; November, 1996 issues



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fell into 16 subject categories, with the greatest number in the "events and news," with 35 stories, followed closely by "technology and equipment" and "sports/recreation" with 32 each. Other significant categories were "Legislation/ Government information" with 25, and "Public relations/ association news" with 15.

A total of 125 articles were reviewed in *Accent on Living*. Nelson (1996) notes this magazine was founded in 1956 "to provide a means for disabled people to find out about products that were available but hard to find" (p. 9), and that background is reflected in the high number of articles (62) in the subject area "Products/equipment."

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Other significant numbers of articles were in the subject areas "Profiles" of individuals (14 stories), "News" (11), "First person" testimonials, "Health/ safety/medical" and "Self improvement" (7 each).

Mainstream was the smallest of the three publications in number of pages, with about 36 pages per issue in the samples examined, and as a result the total number of articles, 55, is lower than the other publications. The category with the greatest number of items was "News," with 10 articles, followed closely by "Editorial/advocacy" articles (9), and articles on "Accommodations/Housing" (8).

Of equal interest in these publications is the type of subjects given least priority. Among the *Paraplegia News* issues analyzed, only one article was on education, and only two covered employment matters; *Accent on Living* published only two articles each on the subjects career training/ employment and accommodations/housing; *Mainstream* included only one article on health, two on careers and two on courts/litigation.

Discussion and conclusions

Scholars have suggested the concept "culture" includes material aspects such as "products shared by a group," including tools and technology (Applebaum and Chambliss, 1995; p. 54) and non-material aspects such as language, beliefs and shared organizations. Results of this study suggest that, at least in magazines of general circulation in the disability community, subjects discussed and given priority confirm the existence of a "disability culture" and help define it.

The dominance in these magazines of articles on products and technology in the lifestyle of the person with a disability provides one strong indicator. Robertson (1994) includes independence among the shared values in disability culture, and observes that "adaptive equipment enable(s) a broader sphere of activity, such that one is not 'confined to a wheelchair' but 'uses a wheelchair' instead." (p. 7) Therefore the predominance of this subject area in the magazines sampled, especially *Paraplegia News* and *Accent on Living*, is notable. Examples of this genre include an article in the January, 1996, issue of *Paraplegia News* entitled "At Your Service," which urges use of only qualified technicians to service vans modified for use by people with disabilities. Another is "60 Years of Portability" in the Winter, 1993, issue of *Accent on Living*, in which author Joyce Faust describes the history of wheelchairs.

Two of the three magazines, *Accent on Living* and *Mainstream*, emphasize editorials or advocacy content, and *Paraplegia News* includes five articles of this type. These are not activist publications like the well-known *Disability Rag* (now *Ragged Edge*), so the "calls to action" such as *Mainstream* editor William G. Stothers's defense of disability activism in his October, 1996 editorial "Why I

Chose to be Disabled" confirm a group consciousness and a largely shared value system, or what sociologist Henslin (1995) calls "a distinct way of looking at life" (p. 44).

In addition, all three publications support event information and other news that cements the group status of the readership. *Paraplegia News*, as reflected by its name and its mission as the official publication of the Disabled Veterans Association, emphasizes event information and closely follows legislation of interest to its audience through a regular "Government Relations" column. *Mainstream* also seeks to serve as a community bulletin board through its "News and Commentary" monthly column.

Content of these three publications also illustrates specialized lifestyle aspects and interests for the person with a disability. Articles on sport and recreation topics such as wheelchair basketball, marathons, and accessible travel destinations are featured in all three publications (notably so in *Paraplegia News*), and information about lifestyle and self-improvement are among the more prominent in *Mainstream* and *Accent on Living*.

Of equal importance in this study are subject categories not emphasized or absent. The late John Clogston (1994) identified several traditional models of newspaper coverage of persons with disabilities: the medical model, the "supercrip" model and the social pathology or economic model. In the three publications analyzed here, health care and disability as a medical condition, as well as government and/or social services, are topics visited extremely infrequently. The absence of these topic areas indicates the cultural importance of independence and pride, and deemphasizes reliance on medical or social/governmental "assistance." Pro-active legislation and litigation, on the other hand, is emphasized in *Mainstream* and *Paraplegia News*, further refuting in these publications the social pathology/economic model.

In total, the subject-matter priorities in this small sample of magazines aimed at persons with disabilities provides evidence of several generally accepted prerequisites of a unique culture. These are tools and technology useful for the person with a disability; a largely shared value system in support of the individual with a disability; and an emphasis on events and information that promote interaction within the disability community and a subsequent empowerment through collective action.

Because this study examined a small sample of publications, future research using larger samples might reveal stronger evidence of a unique "disability culture." As technology advances, review of other media might prove fruitful as well.

In addition, the disability studies field needs some work on definitions. The "disability culture" concept is fairly new, and both qualitative and quantitative research that establishes more firm parameters will be fundamental to further examination of this topic.

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THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

DEFINING DEAF PEOPLE AND THEIR RIGHTS

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THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

DEFINING DEAF PEOPLE AND THEIR RIGHTS

Abstract:

While safeguarding the rights of the deaf and other groups of persons with disabilities, the policies of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also provide a particular interpretation of these groups and their rights. Based on analysis of the ADA and the discourse surrounding it, as well as interviews with leaders of organizations serving deaf and hearing-impaired persons, this paper explores the definitions of the deaf and their rights implicit in this law. It suggests that the law addresses deafness as an inability and the rights of the deaf in terms of their integration into mainstream American society. These definitions, however, are problematic for some deaf leaders who argue that the deaf community is a cultural and linguistic minority and that policies of integration can be threatening to this subculture.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:
DEFINING DEAF PEOPLE AND THEIR RIGHTS

On July 26, 1990, President George Bush appeared before legislators, the press and more than 3,000 disability rights activists to sign a law which he declared to be "the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities." He announced, "I lift my pen to sign this Americans with Disabilities Act and say, let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down."[1] The bill, which received bipartisan support, had passed by a large majority in both the House and Senate.[2] At its signing, Senator Robert Dole announced, "ADA is going to open up magnificent new opportunities for all of us," and Senator Ted Kennedy told supporters, "You have made this country a better, a fairer, a more just nation."[3] Vice President Dan Quayle summarized the discourse of the day. He declared, "The signing of this law ushers in a new era--an era in which Americans with disabilities will have an opportunity for full participation in the American mainstream."[4] The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was hailed as protecting the rights of 43 million Americans with mental and physical disabilities.

The ADA begins with a description of society's tendency "to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities," preventing their full participation in American life.[5] Unlike persons who experience discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion or national origin, individuals with disabilities often have had no legal recourse for addressing inequalities. Based on these observations, the law seeks "to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities."[6] It strives to establish consistent standards and a central role for the Federal Government in enforcing these standards. The ADA endeavors to end widespread discrimination by guaranteeing access to employment, transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications services for citizens with disabilities. While earlier legislation had prohibited organizations which were receiving federal funds from discriminating against individuals with disabilities, the ADA extends these standards into the private sector, regulating businesses regardless of the sources of their income.[7]

During the Congress' final consideration of the bill, Iowa Senator Tom Harkin, chief sponsor of the ADA, conveyed a message to his deaf brother in sign language. He announced to the Senate, "I told him that today Congress opens the doors to all Americans with disabilities."[8] This gesture was appropriate considering that more than half of the persons served by the law, an estimated 24 million Americans, are deaf or hearing-impaired. As the Deputy Executive Director for Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), Brenda Battat, noted, the ADA is often associated with mobility access. The law's regulation of "communication access," however, is the crucial concern for hearing-impaired Americans.[9] The ADA impacts their lives by requiring employers to make "reasonable accommodations" for hearing-impaired employees, by compelling public accommodations to provide similar goods and services to all consumers, regardless of their disabilities, and by mandating that all telephone common carriers establish telecommunication relay services.[10]

In an interview, Wayne Shook, Grand President for the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, asserted that the telecommunication regulations are "the most significant aspect of the ADA" for the 10,000 members which his organization represents. Considering the centrality of the telephone in modern life, previous limitations on the deaf's access to telecommunications services created innumerable problems for this group. With the passage of the ADA, however, Shook maintained that TTY users can "call almost anyone, at any time." He asserted that in the field of telecommunications and other areas, the ADA enables the deaf to secure the "equitable civil rights" afforded to all citizens.[11] Thus the legislation creates a more accessible society in which the rights of the deaf and other groups of individuals with disabilities are recognized. I. King Jordan, the first deaf president of Gallaudet University and a witness during the congressional hearings, agrees with Shook. He writes, "The ADA is our license to access, which is the birthright of every citizen."[12]

In its five sections, the ADA outlines policies aimed at prohibiting discrimination against and protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. Title III, for instance, regulates the "public accommodations and services operated by private entities."[13] Perhaps Title IV is the most important for the deaf community; it mandates the establishment of relay services and the closed-captioning of public service announcements. While safeguarding the rights of the deaf and other groups of persons with disabilities, the policies of the ADA also provide a particular interpretation of these groups and their rights. Based on analysis of the ADA and the discourse surrounding it, as well as interviews with the leaders of organizations serving deaf and hard of hearing people, this paper will explore the definitions of the deaf and their rights implicit in this law.

"Deafness" and the ADA

In his book entitled Mythologies, Roland Barthes suggests that the "power of making the world" resides in the structures of human relations.[14] Persons in society intentionally create specific social conditions, but Barthes notes that societal rhetoric, which he terms "mythology," tends to obscure or hide the "fabricated" nature of these conditions.[15] Particular constructions of the social realm, ones serving the interests of those with the greatest power in society, are frequently described in discourse as unmediated reality.[16] Barthes is frustrated when socially constructed circumstances are viewed as the "natural order." He writes in the preface to his book, "I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn."[17] His work seeks to expose the history and intentions behind what has come to be view as self-evident truth or "common sense."[18]

Harlan Lane also argues that social reality is constructed, and he suggests that social problems are at least "partly what we make them."[19] He maintains that people develop standard interpretations of the challenges which society faces. Although these interpretations are often considered natural explanations, careful examination reveals that they change with time and location. For example, Lane describes the way in which homosexuality has been understood at different times as an immoral act, a psychiatric illness, or a minority classification. Different perceptions of social problems have elicited different societal responses. When excessive drinking, for instance, was viewed primarily as an act of will, the solution was understood in terms of the prohibition of the sale liquor. When society began to view alcoholism as an illness, the solution to the problem was defined as treatment and specialized hospitals. Lane writes:

> The particular way in which society understands alcoholism, or child abuse, or mental retardation, or homosexuality determines exactly what these labels mean, how large groups of people are treated, and the problems that they face.[20]

Many of Lane's works investigate the various interpretations of the social conditions related to "deafness." He contends that one specific interpretation of deafness is accepted as "the 'common sense' position," to the exclusion of alternative perspectives.[21] Lane writes that this particular definition is so entrenched in American thought that "society imagines it is accurately describing attributes of deaf people rather than choosing to talk about them in a certain way."[22] Like Barthes' notion of "myth," this particular perspective on deaf persons, although it is culturally constructed, is so widely subscribed to that it is assumed to be the natural order of things.[23]

Lane identifies "the vocabulary and conceptual framework society has been using with regard to deaf people" as an infirmity model.[24] From this perspective, deafness is viewed as a weakness or disability, and the deaf are judged to be physically impaired or defective. Sociologist Neil Glickman also discusses the prevalent understanding of deafness in contemporary culture, labeling it as a "pathological" interpretation. He describes this interpretation as distinguishing a group of individuals on the basis of a similar disability, regardless of other criteria.[25] Organizations like Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, a major player in the passage of the ADA, understands deafness in these terms. For example, Battat, the Deputy Executive Director, characterized the members of SHHH, saying, "They don't believe it's okay to be deaf--to never hear beautiful music or the wonderful sounds of nature." She maintained that members vigorously utilize any hearing which they still retain. Battat asserted, for her and her organization, "Deafness will always be a disability."[26]

If deafness is understood as an infirmity, efforts to minimize the disabling effects of the malady are one obvious concern. This issue is a primary consideration of the Alexander

Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, Inc. Susan Coffman, the Director of Professional Studies, said that the association supports research and dissemination of information concerning technological developments related to hearing. In an interview, she discussed advancements made in the areas of assistive devices for the deaf and suggested that innovations, coupled with the policies of the ADA, have greatly enhanced the lives of people with hearing losses. "Technology has changed deaf people's lives and given them greater freedom," Coffman said in an interview. She indicated that the goals of the association are to better understand hearing loss and to "integrate deaf people into the mainstream of society." On the basis of these aims, she claimed that any interpretation of deafness, other than as a disability, "is completely irrelevant."[27]

Thomas Allen, Brenda Rawlings and Elizabeth Remington join a host of other researchers in examining one of the newest technological developments in response to deafness, the cochlear implant.[28] This device, approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1990, is an electric coil which is implanted in the inner ear in order to stimulate the auditory nerve and--to a limited degree--simulate the hearing process. The procedure has been hailed as biotechnology which offers deaf children and adults the hope of hearing and speech.[29] The celebration of this development has not been restricted to medical journals and audiological seminars, but it has entered into popular culture. "Sixty Minutes," for example, featured a positive news story about a young deaf girl whose life had been transformed by a cochlear implant. The girl's father described the device as "a miracle of biblical proportions, making the deaf hear."[30] The promise of the implant defines deafness as a tragic infirmity and offers modern medical technology as the response to this problem.

The discourse surrounding cochlear implants demonstrates the extent to which deafness is understood in medical terms. The causes and treatments of deafness as a disability are major issues for those who view the deaf from this perspective. American Journal of Audiology, American Annals of the Deaf, Volta Review and other similar publications approach deafness on this basis. They continually feature articles exploring solutions and treatments for the disabling features of deafness.[31] Lane writes that the hearing loss of the deaf has "played into the hands of those who seek to dispose of social problems by medicalizing them."[32] He suggests that hearing professionals, like audiologists and doctors, have long portrayed the needs of the deaf in terms of the treatment of a disorder and that this definition has become the dominant understanding of deafness in our culture.[33] This perspective informs the press' coverage of deaf issues, the approaches taken in educating deaf children, and legislation related to the deaf.

The Americans with Disability Act, for instance, establishes regulations in a number of areas, based on an interpretation of deafness as an infirmity. A deaf person, like any other person whose rights are safeguarded by the ADA, is considered to have a disability or an "impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual."[34] This definition is derived from the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its concept of a "handicap." Recognizing the preference in word choice of advocates of the ADA in word choice, the 1990 legislation replaces the terms "handicapped person," which carries a negative connotation, with the phrase "a person with a disability."[35] The two phrases, however, are defined identically in the laws. The only exception is that the ADA explicitly excludes illegal drug users and persons with some sexual or behavioral disorders (pedophilia, transvestism, kleptomania, pyromania, etc.) from the protection which it provides.[36]

The law recognizes that throughout history, societies have discriminated against individuals with physical or mental impairments. In seeking to prohibit discrimination, the ADA groups and defines individuals served by the act. In identifying those in need of special protection, the ADA interprets deafness as one of the conditions which limits persons. Deafness is viewed as a disability, one of a number of unfortunate "characteristics that are beyond the control" of individuals.[37] As the Grand President of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, remarked, "In the ADA, deafness equals disability."[38]

Many members of the deaf community, however, have a different perspective on deafness. I. King Jordan, the president of Gallaudet University, for instance, was once asked if he desired to have his hearing back. "That's almost like asking a black person if he would rather be white," he responded. "I don't think of myself as missing something or as incomplete....It's a common fallacy if you don't know deaf people or deaf issues. You think it's a limitation."[39] Activists in the deaf community were disturbed by "Sixty Minutes" tribute to a young girl with a cochlear implant. They viewed the surgery as "the ultimate denial of deafness" and rejection of the deaf community.[40] Roslyn Rosen, former president of the National Association of the Deaf, stated, "I'm happy with who I am, and I don't want to be 'fixed'!"[41] While the Deputy Executive Director of SHHH asserted that it is not "okay to be deaf," Gertrude Galloway, the superintendent of a New Jersey school for deaf children, writes, "'It is okay to be deaf' is the message we should be sending."[42] A medical understanding of deafness focuses attention on the liabilities related to the loss of hearing, and not on the positive and fulfilling aspects of life as a deaf person.

Organizations seeking to advance the interests of deaf people often reject the equating of deafness with an infirmity. For example, Margaret Bibum, Assistant Director for Deafpride, said, "Our organization doesn't consider deaf people to be disabled." She argued that many of the deaf do not describe themselves in the same terms which the ADA uses.[43] M.J. Bienvenu, a deaf activist and Co-director of the Center for Bicultural Studies, concurred with Bibum. She commented, "With the ADA, deaf people are perceived as having a disability."[44] She asked, "When Gorbachev visited the U.S., he used an interpreter to talk to the President. Was Gorbachev disabled?"[45] Bienvenu argued in favor of defining the deaf as a linguistic and cultural minority, similar to the Latino community.[46]

The leader of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf credited Harlan Lane with contributing to the general public's understanding of the deaf as a cultural minority.[47] In many of his works, Lane distinguishes two interpretations of deafness: a dominant one, related to biology, and an alternative view, related to culture. He writes:

> In the disability construction, deafness is associated with silence, the absence of hearing, individual suffering, personal incapacities, and achievement in overcoming great obstacles. In the cultural minority construction, deafness is associated with a unique language, history, culture, social group, and set of social institutions.[48]

In When the Mind Hears, Lane presents a detailed study of the history of the deaf from a cultural perspective. Spanning a period from the Enlightenment through the nineteenth century, this book investigates the experience of the signing community as a linguistic minority. John Van Cleve asserts that historical studies of deaf culture, like this one, did not exist until the 1970s.[49] Lane, however is not alone; Barry Crouch, Carol Padden, Tom Humphries, and Nora Groce are all contemporary scholars who approach the history of the deaf with a cultural definition in mind.[50] Susan Plann and Phyllis Valentine also reevaluate the past, examining the lives of pivotal figures in the history of the deaf, like Ponce de Leon, Gallaudet and Bell, in light of cultural considerations.[51] These recent works indicate that, at least in the academic world, a cultural perspective has begun to challenge the dominant paradigm.

A cultural definition of deafness also has been expressed in the political realm. The predominant medical understanding of deafness has tended to establish hierarchial relationships between hearing professionals and deaf people. In recent years, the deaf empowerment movement has challenged this distribution of power. In 1988, for example, a "Deaf President Now" crusade arose at Gallaudet University when a hearing person, who did not know American Sign Language (ASL), was chosen by the board of trustees to be president. This student crusade placed Gallaudet and the issue of deaf people's right to self-determination at the center of national and international media attention.[52] When Jordan was chosen as the first deaf president in response to the students' activities, he announced, "Deaf people can do anything but hear!"[53] The empowerment movement also has gained ground in attempting to reorganize social services on the basis of the "of, for, and by deaf people" philosophy.[54] The ideals of deaf empowerment are not based on a medical model. They begin with the concept that certain people are "culturally deaf," in other words, related to a deaf community with shared values and language.

The ADA offers a "disability construction" of deafness, to use Lane's phrase, but does it also incorporate a "cultural minority construction"?[55] Sara Geer, a leading attorney for the National Center for Law and Deafness, described the notion of deafness implicit in the ADA as a "functional understanding." She indicated that cultural considerations are excluded from the law's purpose and intent.[56] Maurine Tesler, Executive Director of Denver's Center on Deafness, stated that the ADA's definition of deafness as a disability is necessary because the law deals with the needs of a much larger group than the two million deaf Americans. She contended, "The ADA does not address the deaf as a cultural minority. It can't." Tesler argued that certain characteristics are exclusive and relevant only to the deaf. "No other groups of disabled people have their own language and culture," she said, "and so the ADA does not talk in these terms."[57] All of the leaders of organizations for deaf and hard of hearing people who were interviewed for this paper agreed: the ADA clearly categorizes deaf persons based on their inabilities and perceived weaknesses and not on the minority status of their language and culture.

The Rights of Deaf People and the ADA

Many notions related to our contemporary understanding of democracy are rooted in the philosophies of the Enlightenment. Associated with the dawn of an age of reason or the ascendence of the scientific method, the Enlightenment can also be seen in terms of the rise of the bourgeoisie. Seventeenth-century Europe witnessed continuing shifts in the control of society, as the feudal system passed away.[58] New political theories, which concerned the rights of individuals, government by the consent of the governed, and the ultimate right of revolution, developed in the context of these changes. The principles which these theories contained served the interests of a rising middle class. John Locke, a political theorist of that era, defined life, liberty and the acquisition of property as the "natural rights" of a citizen. He viewed the individual's pursuit and fulfillment of these rights to be the defining purpose of society.[59] Libertarians like Locke regarded humans as rational beings and an end in themselves, and they asserted that the freedom to exchange products, services and ideas allowed for the realization of human potential.

Embracing libertarian ideals, the architects of American democracy envisioned a society in which many diverse elements, acting in accord with their own interests and incentives, would come together to create a balanced and stable system. Jefferson, Franklin and others argued that fierce competition in the context of a marketplace, freed from governmental control, would create a. society in which all those involved would benefit. Isaiah Berlin labels the conception of liberty represented in this perspective as "negative freedom." He equates it with the securing of a space in which the individual is allowed non-coercive choice. Berlin writes that this negative understanding of freedom means "liberty **from**" or "the absence of interference."[60] Libertarianism assumes that limiting the power of the state safeguards the existence and operation of private enterprise.

The issue of negative freedom has entered the discourse surrounding the legal rights of disabled persons. Although a laissez-faire approach to government does not explicitly restrict persons with disabilities from entering into the marketplace, official regulations dismantling discriminatory barriers in the business realm are not welcomed by this position. A number of commentators with a negative understanding of liberty categorize laws seeking to assure the entrance of people with disabilities into society's mainstream as intrusive federal action. For example, the 1979 equal accessibility regulations, requiring old subways to be retrofitted and "handicapped accessible," are disparaged in a number of sources. Publications like The Public Interest, a neolibertarian journal, declare the legislation to be "regulation gone amok" and a "mandate millstone" which threatens local governments' initiatives and economics. "How many billions for wheel chair transit?" one writer asks.[61]

The ADA was greeted by some with a similar negative reaction. When the bill reached the House floor, over 1,200 amendments awaited it. Although only a few were considered, the amendments indicated a general concern for the "excessive regulation" of industry by government.[62] Even after the bill was signed into law, these attacks continued. An article in The New American, for instance, states:

> The Americans with Disabilities Act authorized yet another assault upon the embattled remnant of the private sector....In such a fashion is the roster of favored constituencies enlarged, along with the extra-constitutional power of the federal government.[63]

In this and other articles which challenge the legality of disability legislation, governmental regulations are understood as a threat to liberty, and the ADA is branded as an assault on freedom.

Karl Marx and later Marxist scholars describe the market in very different terms than the libertarians. For them, the market is the realm of inequalities and striking disparity. Marx characterizes the free marketplace of industrial capitalism as the domain of self-estrangement, in which persons are alienated from their lives as producers. He asserts that communism, in rejecting private property, transcends this alienation and better serves humanity. Marx writes, "Equality as the groundwork of communism is its political justification."[64] Berlin categorizes (and critiques) Marxism as based upon a positive understanding of liberty, not "freedom **from**" but "freedom **to.**"[65] He classifies it as a political theory of self-realization which asserts that "to understand the world is to be freed."[66] Berlin notes that historically, a positive notion of liberty, related to this type of perspective, has been used to justify the coercion of some persons "in order to raise them to a 'higher' level of freedom."[67] In other words, rather than restricting state intervention, this interpretation of freedom can be used to further governmental control in the cause of a higher purpose.

As J.M. Barbalet points out, Marx views the freedom associated with negative liberty as "the best that could be achieved 'within the prevailing scheme of things'." Although this type of "political emancipation" is evaluated by Marx as "a big step forward," he ultimately considers it inadequate in light of the inequalities established by the "determining powers of private property."[68] Citizens may be given the "freedom" (in a negative sense) to participate in a market system, but poverty and injustices bar many persons from ever entering the realm of this freedom. T.H. Marshall offers a similar argument. He suggests that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the lower classes were given civil and political rights, but a lack of resources and inexperience muted their power to exercise these privileges. Marshall records that trade unionism was the mechanism through which civil rights were used to establish social rights.[69] With the rise of the welfare state in this century, social rights, which allow persons to become "full members of society at every level," join the civil and political entitlements of citizens, as Graham Murdock and Peter Golding indicate.[70]

Marshall suggests that civil, political and social rights developed in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. Barbalet offers the following definition of these three aspects of citizenship:

> The civil element of citizenship is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom and the institution most directly associated with it is the rule of law and a system of courts. The political part of citizenship consists of the right to participate in the exercise of political power. Such rights are

> associated with parliamentary institutions. The social element of citizenship is made up of a right to the prevailing standard of life and the social heritage of society.[71]

Although persons with disabilities enjoyed rights in the courts and in the political arena, as late as the 1980s, many of them claimed that they were not sharing in this society's "prevailing standard of life."

In the ADA hearings, the disability lobby sought to establish that persons with disabilities were deprived of their social rights due to systemic, societal discrimination. Judith Heumann of the World Institute on Disability testified that disabled persons had only a "second-class citizenship" in the United States. As a wheel chair user, she described being denied an elementary education, a teaching certificate and even air transportation. I. King Jordan's testimony addressed the major barriers to deaf people's participation in society, especially in the area of telecommunications.[72] Heumann and Jordan were joined by witness after witness presenting similar messages. The lobby was so successful in establishing their position that even opponents of the bill began their statements to Congress acknowledging widespread discrimination against the disabled.[73]

The disability lobby considered supporting the ADA by appealing to the charitable obligation of society or the cost effectiveness of the legislation. They, however, feared that these positions ultimately would prove detrimental to their goals. Instead, the lobby chose to frame the ADA as legislation which would provide people with disabilities the same protection given to women and minorities.[74] They conceived of this protection in terms of prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in their "full and equal enjoyment" of goods, opportunities and services.[75] This understanding of rights for the disabled originated in the independent living movement. Founded in 1972 at the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, California, this movement began to unite various organizations and groups and to influence American policies toward disabled persons. It continues to have as its goals: the removal of physical and attitudinal barriers restricting the disabled, the empowerment and independence of this segment of the population, the end of segregated institutions and facilities, and integration of people with disabilities into society in general.[76]

The independent living movement continues to assert that persons with disabilities have special needs which should be "honestly expressed and addressed."[77] For example, during the ADA hearings, the movement focused much attention on the needs of persons who use wheelchairs. The issue of "mobility access" became, in fact, a major emphasis of the ADA, and many of the law's regulations were specifically designed with the needs of wheelchair users in mind. Brenda Battat of SHHH said that "communication access," addressing the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals, is an idea which first was introduced by the ADA.[78] In articulating this issue, the law focuses on "auxiliary aids and services" which can meet the needs of persons with hearing losses and facilitate their full participation in the type of life which other citizens enjoy.[79] Innovations like teletypewriters (TTYs) and closed captioning equipment are viewed as means of offering the deaf an opportunity for greater integration into the mainstream of society and the possibility for "independent living."

Hannah Arendt is critical of what she views to be society's preoccupation with the issue of needs. She asserts that social concerns for the necessities of life have taken too central a place in modern existence, to the detriment of other considerations.[80] She claims that basing politics on matters related to necessities blurs the boundaries between private and public, and it places what were once "household affairs" at the center of communal experience. Arendt equates the "rise of the social" in contemporary life with the demise of the public sphere. She is opposed to focusing political attention on economic matters, whether they relate to the pursuit of wealth or the elimination of inequalities.[81] For her, problems related to the biological necessities and to the disparities of life are administrative concerns. The "passion of compassion," which motivates much current political activity, threatens to debase public life.[82] Arendt argues that public life would be best served if politics focused not on needs but on virtues. In ancient Greece, she finds a realm in which virtues were a central concern. In the Greek "polis", individuals distinguished themselves and were found virtuous through "unique deeds or achievements" in competition with their peers.[83] Thus the concept of the polis forms the basis for her ideal public sphere.

Richard Bernstein critiques Arendt, noting that she conspicuously overlooks the way in which social inequalities often define the context for political competition (as well as the outcome, on many occasions).[84] Although her notions are problematic, Arendt's perspective offers some insights as it calls into question the homogenizing effect of reducing all politics to issues of social necessities. Margaret Canovan notes that Arendt contrasts the plurality of the Athenian polis with the conformity of contemporary society. Canovan explores this theorist's critique of the uniformity of mass culture, in which the issue of needs "swamps all other considerations."[85] She maintains that Arendt promotes a "public realm in which individuals are united in such a way that their plurality is preserved and made manifest."[86] In advancing the ideal of plurality, Arendt raises questions concerning the ADA. Should social policies related to disabilities center completely around the consideration of needs? Recognizing the legislation's goal of integration, what concerns do issues related to the "preservation of plurality" raise?

In sharp contrast to Arendt, many scholars with a Leftist perspective suggest that the social rights of citizens in the welfare state do not go far enough in addressing inequalities. Barbalet, for example, argues that the widening of notions of citizenship to incorporate social rights does not challenge capitalism or the underlying causes of disparity. On the contrary, he maintains that it provides a "safety net of social policy under the disadvantaged" which diminishes class resentment and identity.[87] Claus Offe asserts that socialists criticize the policies of the welfare state as ineffective, repressive and supportive of a false ideology. In their view, the welfare state can be seen as "compensation for...the consequences" of capitalism.[88] Leftist critics, while acknowledging the benefits of expanded social rights and services, assert that fundamental changes in the structure of capitalist societies have not occurred.

Regardless of the allegations in neolibertarian publications, the ADA--although it expands the notion of citizenship to included social rights for the disabled--does not threaten the supposedly "embattled remnant" of the private enterprise system.[89] On the contrary, it carefully safeguards the operation of capitalism. The ADA actually limits in notable ways the provisions that the private sector are required to make for persons with disabilities. Changes which would prove to present businesses with an "undue burden," meaning a "significant difficulty or expense," are not required. Also, any modification of a business which "fundamentally alters its nature," like adding captions to a theatrical film or raising the lights in a night club, are exempt.[90] Feldblum writes, "Congress viewed establishing affirmative requirements on businesses and employers without including concomitant limitations based on cost and operational difficulty as taking the civil rights concept for people with disabilities to an 'extreme' rather than a 'logical' conclusion."[91]

In addition, the transformations dictated by the ADA in the field of telecommunications are limited in some respects. Title IV of the law amends the Communications Act of 1934. As a congressional report indicates, although the mandate for universal services has existed for over half a century, "the inability of over twenty-six million Americans to access fully the nation's telephone system poses a serious threat to the attainment of the goal [of this mandate]."[92] The ADA strives to eliminate discriminatory telephone service by establishing relay systems which provide mediated two-way phone conversations between TTY and non-TTY users. As Deborah Kaplan of the World Institute on Disability points out, although this dual-party service allows TTY users participation in the national telephone network, some persons with communication-related disabilities are still excluded.[93] Kaplan, who is a quadriplegic after a diving accident, works with the Alliance for Public Technology to do, in her words, "what Title IV should have done: ensure equal access to all Americans with disabilities."[94] The closed-captioning requirement which Title IV also regulates actually places no demands on the private realm. Captioning is mandated only for public service announcements produced or funded by the government. Productions created in the private realm, including broadcast television, are not mentioned in relationship to these regulations.[95] As Clifford Moers signed in an interview, "The regulation of captioning is weak in the ADA."[96]

Feldblum notes that the freedom granted to disabled persons in the ADA is the "right to be included within the societal norm."[97] The rights afforded by this legislation--while they cautiously avoid threatening the current structures of society--seek to secure the "prevailing standard of life" for the disabled. Based in part on the goals of the independent living movement, liberty and power for the persons with disabilities are related to their integration into society. The rights of the deaf in the ADA, for instance, are the rights to "communication access": to use the telephone, to understand the message present by public service announcements, to be provide with "auxiliary aids and services" which meet the need of persons without hearing. The privileges guaranteed to the deaf by the ADA are the rights to participate in the "American mainstream," to quote Dan Quayle.

CONCLUSION

Unquestionably, the ADA has benefited deaf people. Margaret Bibum told of TTYs in shopping malls, hotels and restaurants.[98] Wayne Shook discussed interpreting services which are being provided during public meetings, doctors appointments and visits to law offices.[99] Many of the interviews conducted for this paper would not have been possible without the aid of the Colorado Relay Service, an outcome of the ADA regulations. Bibum suggested that currently some members of Congress "have their eyes on dismantling the ADA," and from her perspective, it would be a tragedy if the law was repealed.

Some deaf persons, however, see the law as somewhat problematic. After acknowledging helpful changes generated by the ADA, M.J. Bienvenu suggested that the legislation has created some difficulties for her organization, the Center for Bicultural

Studies.[100] One problem of the ADA is the definition it provides of deaf people and their rights. In coupling an understanding of deafness as a disability with an interpretation of the rights of the deaf in terms of the goals of "independent living," the ADA charts a future for the deaf on the road to integration. In an interview, Harlan Lane suggested that the ADA may be offering deaf persons a "Faustian bargain." While the infirmity perspective celebrates the promises of legislation and new technologies which integrate deaf people into the world of the hearing, Lane argued that for many deaf people, "integration is an anathema."[101] From this position, the ADA offers a construction of deafness which, in the long run, might threaten the language, culture and values of a minority group.

The biological and cultural understandings of deafness are not mutually exclusive. For a deaf person seeking to call a hearing doctor and make an appointment, the disability understanding and the regulations of the ADA are helpful. For deaf parents longing for the birth of a deaf child who can share their world and their language, a cultural understanding is the best explanation. The difficulty occurs when one interpretation of deafness becomes the dominant explanation, to the exclusion of the alternative. This is the case in our society. As Lane states, "There is not yet an institutional understanding of deaf culture in our nation."[102] While the ADA passed in both the House and Senate by a large margin, all attempts to secure legislation and funding for bilingual deaf education have failed.[103] Educational mandates requiring children be educated in the "least restrictive environment" have led to the mainstreaming of deaf students into hearing classroom, at times without the benefit of even one deaf classmate.[104] Even attempts to allow ASL to fulfill college language requirements have been refused.[105] While officials at SHHH and the Alexander Graham Bell Association refused.[105] While officials at SHHH and the Alexander Graham Bell Association view the ADA as a major step in improving the lives of the deaf, some in the signing community fear that Public Law 101-336 ignores definition of the deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority.

NOTES

1. President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, "President Bush: 'Let the Shameful Wall of Exclusion Finally Come Tumbling Down,'" Worklife 3 (Fall 1990): 11.

2. Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 101st Congress, 2nd Session, 1990, vol. 66 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1991), 447. The conference report passed in the House on July 12, 1990 by a vote of 377-28. On the next day, the Senate cleared the bill, approving the report.with a vote of 91-6.

3. President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, "Independence Day 1: The Signing of the ADA," Worklife 3 (Fall 1990): 5, 6.

4. President's Committee, "Independence Day 1," 4.

5. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 2, 328 (1990).

6. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 2, 329 (1990).

7. J. Monique Bebout, "The Americans with Disabilities Act: American Dream Achieved for the Hearing Impaired?" The Hearing Journal 43 (June 1990): 11. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, for example, prohibited the recipients of federal funds from discriminating against persons with disabilities in providing services or employment.

8. Congressional Quarterly, vol. 66, 461.

9. Brenda Battat, Deputy Executive Director, Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., Bethesda, Maryland, phone interview by author, 5 December 1994.

10. Bebout, 11.

11. Wayne Shook, Grand President, the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, Mt. Prospect, Illinois, phone interview by author, 5 December 1994.

12. I. King Jordan, "Reflection on a New Era," in Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act: Rights and Responsibilities of All Americans, ed. Lawrence Gostin and Henry Beyer (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1993), xxx.

13. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 301, 353 (1990). Title I deals with employment, and Title II focuses on public services, especially transportation. Title V includes miscellaneous provisions on topics ranging from regulations concerning federal wilderness areas to the exclusion of transvestites from the category of persons with disabilities.

14. Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1972), 143.

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15. Barthes, 143. Barthes uses the terms "myth" to describe "depoliticized speech" in which certain interpretations--constructed on the basis of particular political intentions--are made to appear natural and universal.

16. Barthes, 146. Barthes relates myth, a second-order language which obscures its history and intentions, with the ruling class' concealment of its power. He writes, "The bourgeoisie hides the fact that it is the bourgeoisie and thereby produces myth."

17. Barthes, 11.

18. In a capitalist society, Barthes suggests that all myth is bourgeois myth. In other words, all myth promotes the interests of the dominant classes.

19. Harlan Lane, "Constructing Deafness in France and the United States," in Parallel Views: Education and Access for Deaf People in France and the United States, ed. Regina Fodor (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1994), 7. Harlan Lane is a professor at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Northeastern University. His research and writing focuses on a cultural understanding of the deaf.

20. Lane, "Constructing Deafness," 7.

21. Harlan Lane, "Cochlear Implants: Their Cultural and Historical Meaning," in Deaf History Unveiled: Interpretations from the New Scholarship, ed. John Vickrey Van Cleve (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), 276-277.

22. Lane, "Cochlear Implants," 276-277.

23. Barthes, 131. Barthes writes that myth is "the naturalization of the concept." It is artificial but it "creeps, so to speak, through the back door of Nature."

24. Lane, "Cochlear Implants," 276.

25. Neil Glickman, "Cultural Identity, Deafness and Mental Health," Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf 20 (October 1986): 1.

26. Battat, phone interview by author.

27. Susan Coffman, the Director of Professional Studies, Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, Inc., Washington, D.C., phone interview by author, 30 November 1994.

28. Thomas E. Allen, Brenda W. Rawlings & Elizabeth Remington, "Demographic and Audiological Profiles of Deaf Children in Texas with Cochlear Implants," American Annals of the Deaf, 138, no. 3 (1993): 260.

29. Gillian Weiss, "New Hope for Deaf Children: Approval of Cochlear Implants by the FDA," American Health 9 (November 1990): 17.

30. Edward Dolnick, "Deafness as Culture," The Atlantic Monthly, 27 (September 1993): 43.

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31. Carolyn Ewoldt, Neita Israelite & Ron Dodds, "The Ability of Deaf Students to Understand Text: A Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers and Students," American Annals of the Deaf, 137, no. 4 (1992): 351-360. Katherine W. Gibbs, "Individual Differences in Cognitive Skills Related to Reading Ability in the Deaf," American Annals of the Deaf, 134, no. 3 (1989): 214-218. Charlene M. Kampfe, "Reading Comprehension of Deaf Adolescent Residential School Students and Its Relationship to Hearing Mothers' Communication Strategies and Skills," American Annals of the Deaf, 134, no. 5 (1989): 317-322. Thomas N. Kluwin & Arlene Blumenthal Kelly, "Deaf Adolescents who drop out of local public schools," American Annals of the Deaf, 137, no. 3 (1992): 293-298. These articles from American Annals of the Deaf are examples of research into the disabling effects of deafness and strategies for responding to problems associated with an inability to hear.

32. Harlan Lane, When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf (New York: Random House, 1984), xiii.

33. Lane, "Constructing Deafness," 3.

34. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 3, 330 (1990).

35. Chai R. Feldblum, "Antidiscrimination Requirements of the ADA," in Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act: Rights and Responsibilities of All Americans, ed. Lawrence O. Gostin & Henry A. Beyer (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1993), 38.

36. Feldblum, 41.

37. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 2, 329 (1990).

38. Shook, phone interview by author.

39. Lane, "Cochlear Implants," 288.

40. Dolnick, 43. "Sixty Minutes" received letters attacking the notion of implants as "pathological," "genocide" and "child abuse."

41. Dolnick, 38. Roslyn Rosen is not only the former President of the National Association of the Deaf; she currently serves as Gallaudet University's Vice President of Academic Affairs.

42. Gertrude S. Galloway, "Equality in Education," in Parallel Views: Education and Access for Deaf People in France and the United States, ed. Regina Fodor (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University, 1994), 104. Galloway is superintendent of the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf in West Trenton, New Jersey.

43. Margaret Bibum, Assistant Director, Deafpride, Inc., Washington, D.C., phone interview by author, 29 November 1994.

44. M.J. Bienvenu, Co-director, Center for Bicultural Studies, Inc., Riverdale, Maryland, phone interview by author, 5 December 1994.

45. Dolnick, 43. Bienvenu made this comment in an interview with The Atlantic Monthly.

46. Bienvenu, phone interview by author.

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47. Shook, phone interview by author.

48. Lane, "Constructing Deafness," 8.

49. John Vickrey Van Cleve, "Preface," in Deaf History Unveiled: Interpretations from the New Scholarship, ed. John Vickrey Van Cleve (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), ix.

50. Carol Padden & Tom Humphries, Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988). John V. Van Cleve & Barry A. Crouch, A Place of Their Own: Creating the Deaf Community in America (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1989). Nora Ellen Groce, Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985). Groce's book presents an interesting historical context in which--due to a high rate of hereditary deafness and geographic isolation--deafness was not considered an abnormality or defined as a disability.

51. Susan Plann, "Pedro Ponce de Leon: Myth and Reality," in Deaf History Unveiled: Interpretations from the New Scholarship, ed. John V. Van Cleve (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), 1-12. Phyllis Valentine, "Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet: Benevolent Paternalism and the Origins of the American Asylum," in Deaf History Unveiled: Interpretations from the New Scholarship, ed. John V. Van Cleve (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), 53-73.

52. Lawrence R. Fleischer, "Language and Culture in the Struggle for Empowerment," in Parallel Views: Education and Access for Deaf People in France and the United States, ed. Regina Fodor (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1994), 101.

53. Roslyn Rosen, "Advocacy and Agendas in the United States," in Parallel Views: Education and Access for Deaf People in France and the United States, ed. Regina Fodor (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1994), 43.

54. Marcella M. Meyer, "Access in California: A Case Study," in Parallel Views: Education and Access for Deaf People in France and the United States, ed. Regina Fodor (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1994), 194.

55. Lane, "Constructing Deafness," 8.

56. Sara Geer, attorney, the National Center for Law and Deafness, Washington, D.C., phone interview by author, 2 December 1994.

57. Maurine Tesler, Executive Director, Center on Deafness, Denver, Colorado, phone interview by author, 25 November 1994.

58. For instance, the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 and the "Bill of Rights" established English parliamentary sovereignty over the crown.

59. Joseph Strayer & Hans Gatzke, The Mainstream of Civilization, 3rd ed (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979), 461.

60. Isaiah Berlin, Four Essays on Liberty (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 127.

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61. Robert A. Katzmann, Institutional Disability: The Saga of Transportation Policy for the Disabled (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1986), 3.

62. Bebout, 13.

63. William Norman Grigg, "ADA Demonstrates How Civil Rights Laws are Pitched Against Employers," The New American 8 (September 21, 1992), 13.

64. Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 99.

65. Berlin, 131.

66. Berlin, 142.

67. Berlin, 132.

68. J.M. Barbalet, Citizenship: Rights, Struggle and Class Inequality, Concepts in Social Thought, ed. Frank Parkin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 3.

69. Barbalet, 23. Barbalet's book is an extended discussion of Marshall's Citizenship and Social Class, published in 1950.

70. Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, "Information Poverty and Political Inequality: Citizenship in the Age of Privatized Communications," Journal of Communication 39 (Summer 1989): 182.

71. Barbalet, 6.

72. Congress, House, Committee on Education and Labor, Legislative History of Public Law 101-336, The Americans with Disabilities Act, Vol. 1, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., Dec. 1990, 105, 112.

73. Sara D. Watson, "A Study in Legislative Strategy: The Passage of the ADA," in Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act: Rights and Responsibilities of All Americans, ed. Lawrence O. Gostin & Henry A. Beyer (Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1993), 30.

74. Watson, 29-30.

75. Feldblum, 43.

76. Judith E. Heumann, "Building Our Own Boat: A Personal Perspective on Disability Policy," in Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act: Rights and Responsibilities of All Americans, ed. Lawrence O. Gostin & Henry A. Beyer (Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1993), 30.

77. Heumann, 257-258.

78. Battat, phone interview by author.

79. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 3, 329 (1990).

80. Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 33.

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81. Arendt, 30-31.

82. The purposes of the ADA might be view as related to this "passion of compassion."

83. Arendt, 41.

84. Richard J. Bernstein, "Rethinking the Social and Political," in his Philosophical Profiles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 249.

85. Margaret Canovan, Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 118.

86. Canovan, 117.

87. Barbalet, 46.

88. Claus Offe, "Some Contradictions of the Modern Welfare State," in his Contradictions of the Welfare State, ed. John Keane (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 154.

89. Grigg, 13.

90. Feldblum, 48.

91. Feldblum, 50.

92. Karen Peltz Strauss, "Title IV--Telecommunications," in Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act: Rights and Responsibilities of All Americans, ed. Lawrence Gostin & Henry Beyer (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Co., 1993), 160.

93. These persons include individuals with cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, retardation and blindness.

94. Frank G. Bowe, "Access to the Information Age: Fundamental Decisions in Telecommunications Policy," Policy Studies Journal, 21, no. 4 (1993): 766-767.

95. Americans with Disabilities Act, Statutes at Large, 104, sec. 402, 369 (1990).

96. Clifford Moers, Coordinator, Office of Services to Disabled Students, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, personal interview by author utilizing the services of an interpreter, 17 November 1994.

97. Feldblum, 50-53.

98. Bibum, phone interview by author.

99. Shook, phone interview by author.

100. Bienvenu, phone interview by author.

101. Harlan Lane, Lecturer at Harvard Medical School, Research Associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Distinguished University Professor at Northeastern University, Boston, Mass., phone interview by author, 2 December 1994.

102. Lane, phone interview by author.

103. Bienvenu, phone interview by author.

104. Rosen, 42.

105. Moers, personal interview by author.

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HAND-LING MEDIA RESEARCH ON DISABILITY: TOWARD INCLUDING A FEMINIST "EXILE" PERSPECTIVE ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

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HAND-LING MEDIA RESEARCH ON DISABILITY: TOWARD INCLUDING A FEMINIST "EXILE" PERSPECTIVE ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

Susan Wendell (1996), a feminist philosopher, writes that she went from healthy to severely stricken by chronic fatigue syndrome in fall 1985. As it became clear that her condition was chronic, she began to recognize herself as disabled. She realized that the world was "structured for people who have no weaknesses. The process of encountering the able-bodied world led me gradually to identify myself as a disabled person, and to reflect on the nature of disability" (Wendell, 1989, p. 104).

Like Wendell, I was not born with my disability - a repetitive strain injury (RSI) from newspaper copy editing.[1] In fact, only 15 percent of persons with disabilities are born with their disabilities (Shapiro, 1994, p. 7). Despite the commonality of disability in our culture - figures range from 35 million to 120 million persons in America with disabilities, depending on the definition used - persons with disabilities are still treated like the minority (Shapiro, 1994). I've found that shifting from the perspective of a temporarily able-bodied person into a disability perspective has been a grueling and alienating experience - even from the feminist community I had felt so close to before. I found a lack of feminist theory and research dealing with disability, although a growing body of material has recently been published. Considering feminist theory's attempts to explain complex interactions between the different aspects of individual identity and oppression, I believe feminist theory could provide a basis from which disability issues could be explored and integrated into research.

While feminist media scholars have made gains in including race, class, and sexual orientation in their analyses, there is a dearth of feminist media literature dealing with disability and disability perspectives. In this paper, I hope to emphasize the relevance of a disability perspective to feminist theory and to the practice of feminist media research. I will begin by discussing feminist theory's open system of theory and practice, as well as the incompleteness of feminism without the inclusion of a disability perspective. I will then discuss the space in feminist media studies for a disability perspective and articulate the issues central to a feminist disability framework. Lastly, I will suggest preliminary ideas toward a program of research for feminist disability scholars in media. This program will explore the potential for research on representations of disability in the mainstream and alternative media, as well as on workers with disabilities in the journalistic and academic workplaces. These points will be based on my preliminary explorations of literature on feminism, feminist media studies, and disability studies.

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[1] My RSI entails chronic pain in my entire upper extremities: hands, arms, shoulders, chest, neck, and upper and lower back.

As a young,[2] college-educated, white women with a chronic, invisible physical disability, I cannot pretend to speak for every woman with a disability.[3] However, I hope this paper will be a catalyst for conversations on how a disability perspective might fill the gap in the current mainstream feminist agenda - especially in media studies. I also hope this paper will alert disability scholars to the relevance of grounding disability research in feminist theory. I find myself shifting between disability "perspective" and "perspectives" - a necessary tension between my strong identification with the disability rights movement's attempts to create solidarity in the disability community and the complex reality of individuals with diverse disabilities. As different researchers ground this theoretical perspective in their own work and experience, they may create different visions of the "feminist disability perspective."

I call this feminist disability perspective an "exile" perspective, borrowing from feminist anthropologist Ruth Behar's (1995) introduction to Women writing culture. She hopes that her anthology will help create an anthropology "without exiles" (p. 8). By including multiple forms of writing and a spectrum of oppression issues, she argues that the authors in Women writing culture:

> do not simply cite the work of women of color or recite the mantra of gender, race, and class and go on with academic business as usual, handing difference over with one hand and taking it away with the other (p. 7).

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[2] I'm now 29; I was 25 when I first acquired RSI.

[3] I realize it is problematic to make a distinction between physical and mental disabilities, considering the sordid history of the false split in Western thought between mind and body and considering that so-called mental disabilities are genetically and neurochemically based. I use this term in an attempt to more precisely situate myself and my particular disability.

Whether "hand"-ing over difference as feminist scholars without disabilities or as feminist scholars with disabilities who "hand"-le their research from a different perspective of lived experiences, delineating the possible contributions of a disability perspective to feminist theory may open up new research areas and new understandings of the bodies within which we live.

Feminist theory

Feminism is a critique of historically constructed male authority under patriarchy. Feminism itself is a contested term. There is a tendency to discuss "strands" of feminism as a way to delineate the specific intellectual histories of branches of feminist thought - radical, liberal, Marxist / Socialist, etc. (Tong, 1989; Donovan, 1992; Whelelan, 1995).[4] However, in actual practice, these strands are not so discrete. With different approaches and intellectual histories to feminism, is there a common goal all feminists share? Feminist anthropologist Irene Silverblatt (1991) writes: "Although feminists do not speak in one voice, they share a hope and a commitment to a world free of dominations" (p. 165).

Feminists recognize that there is oppression, that this oppression needs to be annihilated, and that oppressions are interlocking and complex in everyday life. This sensitivity to difference is a hallmark of recent feminist thought, and an important component of its potential for social transformation.[5] There is no hierarchy of oppression or identity, with one form competing over the other (Lorde, 1995; hooks, 1984). To encourage consideration of the connectedness and complexity of human oppression and identity, feminist media scholar Angharad Valdivia (1995) and feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1986) directly deal with the issue of difference via multiple, linked oppressions. Feminism and multiculturalism problematize the binary division of gender and black/white culture, respectively, according to Valdivia.

Valdivia suggests studying identity through a "spectrum approach" that considers all the components of our identities - i.e. the multiple sites of oppression "a poor, Third World, lesbian woman of color" might face - keeping in mind that a "multipronged analysis in a culture replete with binary explanatory frameworks is contradictory, as anyone involved in that experience will tell you" (p. 17). These spectrums, Valdivia argues, change with trips down the socioeconomic ladder, access to power, geography , and shifts in time (p. 19). So, her idea of spectrums of oppression and identity flies in the face of any mere additive formula for change.

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[4] Whelelan (1995) also includes lesbian feminism and black feminism in their own chapters, as branches of feminist thought.

[5] I'd like to thank Hanno Hardt for his clear wording of this aspect of feminist thought.

This complex, interlocking relationship between women's lived realities and feminist theories of oppression is what has kept feminism flexible enough to continue to incorporate new ideas and challenge itself. Bricker-Jenkins and Hooyman (1987), feminist educators, stress the necessarily shifting nature of feminist ideology as an open system that is constantly "criticized from within and open to exchange with other ideologies" (p. 36). This ideology is organic, grounded in everyday experience. This is the nature of "praxis," which is at the core of feminist theory and practice: "theory follows from practice and it is impossible to develop in the absence of practice, because our theory is that practicing our practice is our theory" (p. 36). While this wording may seem circular, it is a recognition of the interconnectedness of all aspects of life (often separated in our dualistic, patriarchal society) and a strength of feminism.

Catherine Lutz (1995) asks how gender plays into the formation of canons of anthropology, but her points are appropriate to any field and feminist theory in general. "One central way is through the designation of particular works as theoretical and the masculinizing of theory" (p. 249). She argues that one way theory is masculinized is by including higher and higher levels of abstraction, enhancing the authority of the speaker and erasing the subject:

> [B]y definition, theory has traditionally allowed for erasure of the subject - both the subject who writes and the human subjects who are written about. It allows the theorist to avoid the roots of statements in real-world encounters, to speak for or appear to speak for the whole, and to speak from a transcendental vantage point (p. 259).

Lutz's remark illustrates why early anthologies of feminism include a variety of forms, from poetry to prose, which detail personal experience and grassroots activism. She also reminds us that one of the greatest critical feminist tools for evaluating work is the consideration of the positionality of the researcher and the research, remembering that no experience can ever be divorced from context.

There are also no "minds" floating around, disconnected from their "bodies" - an interconnectedness that feminism continually reminds us of. Nancy Hartsock (1983) in her arguments for a feminist materialism furthers the notion of grounding our theory in material reality. A concept of Hartsock's that I find particularly relevant in regard to disability is her reminder of "the bodily aspect of existence. ... There is some biological, bodily component to human existence" (p. 289). She reminds us that, as "embodied humans, we are of course inextricably both natural and social (p. 283-284). While Hartsock is speaking specifically about the Marxian category of labor, her emphasis on the interaction between the social and the "natural" is also important for feminist scholars to remember when dealing with disability perspectives.

So, there clearly is a space for incorporating a disability perspective in feminist thought. I will now explore whether feminist media scholars may be open to also including this perspective in theory and practice.

Feminist media studies

Feminist media scholars, especially in the last decade, have challenged male-centered research in communication and the dominant paradigm of positivist, quantitative methods used in such research. Explorations by feminist media scholars regarding different theories and approaches to research have sought to better encompass the range of women's concerns - moving away from liberal feminist analyses of white, heterosexual, middle and upper class women (Steeves, 1987; Treichler and Wartella, 1986).

In fact, several anthologies now detail research on women, media representation, and the media and academic workforce from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives - including more complex cultural studies approaches (i.e., Creedon, 1993; Dines and Humez, 1995; Valdivia, 1995; Allen, Rush, and Kaufman, 1996). However, while these anthologies cover the diverse concerns of race, class, and sexual orientation of women from the newsroom to Bangladesh, not one of them has work on gender and disability. Valdivia is the only one who acknowledges that her anthology lacks chapters focusing on age and ability, issues that she believes are important to her vision of feminist multicultural research in media: "[W]e hope that scholarship to fill these blank spots on our nocturnal map is forthcoming" (p. 23).

These anthologies are important, because they have opened a space for feminist research in media - legitimating this research on women and oppression as a catalyst for diverse topics, theories and methods. Because these feminist researchers are endeavoring to include the diverse and complex experiences of women and media, they should be open - as Valdivia clearly states - to filling the gap on disability issues in the spectrum of media research.

Feminism and disability

Defining disability

The politics of identity Valdivia refers to are crucial to opening a feminist space for disability issues. What does it mean to label yourself "disabled"? I struggled with this myself: from calling myself merely injured, since RSI is a work-related injury, to finally settling on disabled. I encountered strong reactions along the way: one mentor told me "you're healthy, just injured"; another mentor, when I was relating how difficult it was to hunt for a job since I could no longer type by hand, snapped at me in disgust, "you're making yourself sound disabled!"[6] In the end, I came to the same realization as Susan Wendell did when she became ill with chronic fatigue syndrome: that with my changed body, I couldn't escape society's definitions of what disability is and the stigma associated with it.

Definitions of disability are couched historically in Protestant and Liberal notions of welfare and charity (Shapiro, 1994; Matthews, 1983). While the "deserving poor," historically included "the disabled," disability was also seen as an individual medical problem or affliction - not a societal issue.

Shapiro notes that there is no expert consensus on what constitutes disability and, like any defining process, the definition affects the statistics. He says that most researchers define it as "activity limitation." However, disability rights advocates believe the definition should "include health conditions that may not be limiting but still stigmatize or cause discrimination" (p. 7) - both are concepts included in the definition of disability in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).[7] Figures on the number of people with disabilities in America range from 35 million (1991 figure from Institute of Medicine) to 49 million (1994 census report) to looser estimates of 120 million, when any disease or chronic health condition is included. As Shapiro stresses, "even at the lowest estimate, disabled people could be considered the nation's largest minority" (p. 7).

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[6] I now type using a voice-recognition computer system.

Wendell (1989) criticizes the United Nations' definitions of and distinctions between impairment, disability, and handicap for making "a shaky distinction between the physical and the social aspects of disability" (p. 107). The first two terms deal specifically with physical and psychological inability to perform to a norm - a norm about the appropriate level of performance, dependent on cultural paradigms about health. Wendell herself prefers using the term, "disability," and emphasizes her belief "that disability is socially constructed from biological reality" (1989, p. 107). Feminist disability scholar Rosemarie Thomson (1997) also agrees with this culturally situated definition of disability. Thomson writes that disability is a "representation" of how bodies are interpreted and compared in our culture. She, like Wendell, believes that this definitional process results in value judgments: "Disability... is the attribution of corporeal deviance - not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural roles about what bodies should be or do" (p. 6).

Fred Pelka (1996) adds another disturbing contemporary element into this defining process, noting that people who attack the ADA often do so by creating the notion of "the deserving disabled." Some see a false distinction between the "truly disabled," people who use wheelchairs or have hearing and visual impairments, and the "faux disabled" - "all those recovering alcoholics, drug addicts, people with back pain, fat people and the dangerous mentally ill" (p. 38).

Indeed, as Shapiro suggests and I've found in my experiences to date, people's attitudes about disabilities are much more limiting than the disability itself. "[I]t is not so much the disabled individual who needs to change, but society" (Shapiro, p. 19). Feminist disability writer Jenny Morris (1991) argues that “people are far more disabled by their attitudes than we are by our physical condition once we acknowledge it unreservedly” (p. 170). This recognition of the social construction of disability and of the need for societal change clearly fits into the agenda of feminist theory and practice.

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[7] For example, conditions that may not cause physical limitation, but stigmatize individuals are fat/obesity and facial scars.

Feminist disability perspective

Wendell and Jenny Morris (1993) both express their sense of alienation from and outrage at the feminist community for its “failure... to integrate the concerns of disabled women into its theory, methodology, research and politics” (Morris, 1993, p. 57). They both argue that feminism is incomplete and poorer for it failure to address the concerns of women with disabilities.

Morris's sense of alienation and anger stem from two characteristics of feminism: how disability is invisible in feminism's mainstream agenda and, when feminists do use disability as a research topic, how they “fail to take on the subjective reality of disabled people, instead objectifying us so that the research is alienated from our experience” (1993, p. 57). In other words, Morris and Wendell both feel that an oppressive, nondisabled lens used by researchers - feminist and otherwise - warps the small amount of research actually done on disability issues and perpetuates the “personal tragedy” and “medical models” of disability that pathologize person with disabilities (Morris, 1991, p. 180).

For example, women with disabilities are often objectified in discussions about physician-assisted suicide and aborting fetuses with disabilities - where people without disabilities may automatically assume that people with disabilities would wish to die and assume that fetuses with disabilities may be best off if they aren't born. These attitudes about the disabled life as “not worth living,” according to Morris (1991), are especially insidious because they are taken for granted in our culture.

Even in an otherwise rich feminist analysis of the news coverage of violence against women, Miriam Meyers (1997) makes a remark that portrays disabled women through this ableist lens. She argues that women are often seen as responsible for protecting themselves against assault, unless “old” or “infirm” (p. 66). She goes on to say: “Women who are physically disabled also may be represented as innocent because, like children and elderly women, they are presumed to be - *and often are* - frail and vulnerable[emphasis added]" (p. 69).[8] Where does Meyers - or any other researcher - acquire the assumption that women with disabilities are "often" "frail and vulnerable"? A more in-depth interrogation of the details of and statistics on (or lack thereof) the experiences women with disabilities have with assault would round out this aspect of Meyers' analysis. According to Shelley Tremain (1996), much feminist research naturalizes certain notions of disability and ability, including the idea that women with disabilities are frail, inferior, and childlike.

In fact, Danielle Buckman (1995), in her study on aging and disabled women vs. nondisabled women, found that "[d]isabled women were seen as weak and dependent. This made women who wanted to emphasize strength and independence uncomfortable" (p. 20). This may, unwittingly, be a reason why feminists have not fully embraced the disability perspective: fear of an image of weakness. At the same time, as Thomson notes, no firm boundaries can be drawn between women with disabilities and women without disabilities. "Not only has the female body been labeled deviant, but historically the practices of femininity have configured female bodies similarly to disability" - practices such as foot binding, clitoridectomy, and corseting (Thomson, p. 27).

Who would it benefit to continue viewing the world through this nondisabled lens? Not feminists, with their goal of ending all forms of oppression and of understanding how oppressions interlock in different situations. People with disabilities are being used as scapegoats for the decrease in secure jobs, and for ever-shrinking education dollars (Pelka, p. 38-39). More than half of persons with disabilities are women and approximately 16 percent of women are disabled (Fine and Asch, 1988). Because so many women are involved and "because feminists thinkers have raised... radical issues about cultural attitudes toward the body," Wendell believes any theory of disability should be social, political, and feminist (1989, p. 105).

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[8] I'd like to thank Mia Consalvo for pointing out this representation in Meyers' book. I don't wish to invalidate Meyers' book as a whole or single her out as the only researcher making these assumptions. However, I hope that pointing out this example will provide an opportunity for feminist researchers to more closely examine their ableist assumptions anywhere in their research.

The problem of ignorance about the realities of being a person with a disability means that a nondisabled perspective is used to describe and study persons with disabilities, with similar results to using a misogynist perspective to describe and define women's realities. Pelka shares tale after tale of people "adept at pitting the civil rights of disabled people against the convenience of everyone else, often demonstrating a woeful ignorance of the realities of life with a disability" - for example, nondisabled bus riders incensed at having to wait a few minutes for someone with a wheelchair to board (p. 39).

Feminists, indeed, should be struck by how similar these tactics are to the ways "women's calls for equality have been dismissed as absurd, unreasonable, selfish" (Pelka, p. 39). Pelka says: "It is no coincidence that many of the ADA cases cited as frivolous involve obese women, whose concerns about discrimination can, of course, be laughed off as absurd" (Pelka, p. 39).

Controlling the body

Wendell believes the public world is of strength, youth, and able-bodiedness, while weakness, pain, illness, and other aspects of the devalued body are hidden in the private world. Morris (1991) argues that this is why people with disabilities, in the past, have been hidden away in institutions. With the statistics I've given on the numbers of persons with disabilities, it is hard to imagine that the needs of such an enormous group could be ignored - especially when we all have a chance of becoming disabled. As Wendell reminds us, we all age. "Age is disabling. Recognizing this helps us to see that disabled people are not 'other,' they are really 'us.' Unless we die suddenly, we are all disabled eventually" (1989, p. 108). So, if people with disabilities are us, why the ignorance and misunderstandings?

Wendell argues that the oppression of people with disabilities comes from the lack of room in our cultural space for real, feeling bodies. She believes a lot of our experience with our bodies goes underground, because there's no other way of expressing it:

> I found that, after a couple of years of illness, even answering the question, "How are you?" became a difficult, conflict-ridden business. I don't want to alienate my friends from my experience, but I don't want to risk their discomfort and rejection by telling them what they don't want to know (1989, p. 111).

As Wendell and I have both discovered, most able-bodied people "do not want to know about suffering caused by the body" (1989, p. 111). Suffering, Wendell says, is feared. So, it is a way that everyone can further distance themselves from the reality of the bodies they live in. Disability, according to Thomson, subverts the liberal American ideal that everyone can become a master of destiny and self (p. 41). "The disabled body stands for the self gone out of control, individualism run rampant" (Thomson, p. 43).

This idealizing of and alienation from the body comes from a desire to control the body, something that feminist theorists have analyzed in respect to our patriarchal culture. "Idealizing the body and wanting to control it go hand-in hand; it is impossible to say whether one causes the other" (Wendell, 1989, p. 113).[9] In such a world, Wendell argues, those who cannot control their bodies are seen as failures; health is seen as a moral virtue. Thomson explains this concept of health as virtue via Melvin Lerner's "just world" theory, which dictates that "the human need for order and predictability gives rise to a belief that people get what they deserve or that things are the way they should be" (p. 36). This doctrine, Thomson argues, provides a psychological safeguard against the randomness of experience, but results in victim-blaming and scapegoating of those who are different.

Western medicine plays into this myth that the body can be controlled by directing research and medical care "toward [more] life-threatening conditions than toward chronic illnesses and disabilities. Even pain was relatively neglected as a medical problem until the second half of this century" (Wendell, 1989, p. 114). This funding and research focus sets up the doctor as a "hero" who can control the body. Those persons with disabilities, who cannot be simply "cured" within this system, are seen as abnormal and even at fault for their disabilities. Thomson again positions disability in America in the context of liberal thought when it comes to this blaming. She argues that these disorderly, disabled bodies threaten the autonomous individual's inviolable boundaries and right to unfettered self-determination:

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[9] Feminist medical anthropologist Emily Martin (1994) explores the concept of immunity in American culture - from polio to HIV - via examining media content and scientific studies and conducting ethnographic research. She finds that we are increasingly pressured to alienate ourselves from our bodies by thinking of them as "flexible" in health and work practices. Martin (1992) finds in another ethnography, specifically exploring women and medical texts, that women in particular are increasingly alienated from their bodies in the medical system's negative labeling of natural body functions such as menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause. This alienation, Martin argues, also comes from the control the medical system attempts to exert over women in the birth process.

> [T]he disabled figure represents the complete, unbounded, compromised, and subjected body susceptible to external forces: property badly managed, a fortress inadequately defended, a self helplessly violated (p. 45).

By incorporating an examination of liberal ideology into her analysis, Thomson provides another example of how fear of disability is naturalized and created in the United States.

This lack of a disability perspective in medicine and culture harms everyone, because it ignores the reality that most of us will need to learn to cope with long-term illness, and "how to live with limitation, uncertainty, pain, nausea, and other symptoms" when doctors cannot simply make them go away (Wendell, 1989, p. 115). In this case, when we make people with disabilities the "other," we are "othering" our own bodies, as well. So, what might happen to our view of the body, if we began to look at it from a disability perspective? Thomson believes that incorporating this perspective has the potential to enrich cultural meanings of the body and transform them (p. 37). Thomson extrapolates from queer theorist Eve Sedgwick's distinctions between a "minoritizing" view of difference which limits difference to the concerns of a narrow population and a "universalizing" view of difference which sees issues surrounding a particular area of difference as important in the lives of people across the spectrum of identity and oppression: "Disability should become a universalizing discourse" (Thomson, p. 22).[10]

Capturing the complexity of disability: A feminist cultural analysis approach

While we acknowledge that disability is socially constructed, we can't leave out biological realities of disability. The very nature of many disabilities "reduce or consume the energy and stamina of people who have them and do not just limit them in some particular kind of physical activity" (Wendell, 1989, p. 116). However, to jump to the extreme of celebrating the "disabled hero" gives the unrealistic impression that a disability may be overcome by hard work (Morris, 1991; Wendell, 1989).

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[10] I realize there is some negative Enlightenment baggage with the idea of "universalizing." The term here should be defined more in the spirit of feminist cultural scholar Chela Sandoval's notion of "politics of coalition" - not erasing difference, but creating coalition among different groups around a common goal.

So, how do we deal with difference and disability? Some feminists have suggested that difference is always a negative. Feminist anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1993) writes: "a difference between self and other will always be hierarchical because the self is sensed as primary, self-formed, active, and complex, if not positive. At the very least, the self is always the interpreter and the other the interpreted" (p. 13). Abu-Lughod (1991) believes that "culture" historically has been a tool for creating this inferior "other." While her idea has some merit, it denies the "positive" aspects of difference - including subjects' agency in creating their own culture and representations. Thomson acknowledges that a "strategic constructionist" argument is important to reveal disability as a cultural construct, thus avoiding essentializing while destigmatizing the disabled body. However, Thomson also believes that "strategic essentialism" is needed to validate the individual experiences and diverse bodily realities of disability (p. 23).

Incorporating the perspective of persons with disabilities will mean a re-visioning of what the body is like - that it ages and changes in abilities. This more complex view of disability, Wendell says, reminds us that "to be disabled in some respects is not to be disabled in all respects. ...[A] disabled person may have abilities that the able-bodied lack in virtue of being able-bodied" (1989, p. 117).[11]

In the disability community, there are debates about whether a disability culture is possible, taking the diverse experiences of disability into account. Disability rights activists such as Carol Gill argue that all persons with disabilities experience a sense of community because society continually reminds them that they are different (Johnson, 1987). At the same time, she acknowledges that persons with disabilities often resist coming together because of this stigma and because they've been so isolated from society and each other. Gill feels people with disabilities can have their own culture - and need their own culture for a sense of community and pride. She discusses disability culture as needing rituals, songs, history, and mythology of its own. Cheryl Marie Wade (1996), however, does not share Gill's optimism. Wade roundly criticizes any "disability" event as too intimately linked to mainstream foundations, such as Goodwill, who have too much invested in exploiting the notion of disability.[12] She also hits on rifts within the disability community, that may prevent any attempt at a common disability culture: "What real difference does it make whether all the decisions about us are made by able-bodied people in the name of 'for *your* own good' or by a self-appointed Elite Corps of the Righteously Disabled in the name of 'for *our* own good'?" (p. 41).

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[11] For example, persons who are deaf consider themselves to have their own culture. Thomson notes that the deaf community was originally defined by its segregation from the rest of society, but has formed its own identity. Viewed from a deaf standpoint, people who can speak English and sign in American Sign Language are bilingual. Deaf children often create their own interpretations of English phrases, such as "Going camping, I wear my pack-back" and "The police arrived in a helicopper"(Sunstein, 1994, p. 98-99). Also, different cultures may view disability in a less stigmatizing manner than our own. In the descriptive language of the Navajo culture, the Western labels of mental retardation or autism are not used. Instead, the descriptive labels of "she runs away" or "he's in his own world" may be used (Connors and Donnellan, 1995, p. 171).

These debates about the possibility of "disability culture" or "cultures" is continually played out in writings by persons with disabilities. Women are active in this attempt to create disability culture. There are many anthologies for anyone who wishes to explore the personal experiences of women with disabilities - explicitly created to share the realities of disability and to create solidarity and culture within the disability community. These anthologies encompass the different experiences of different disabilities, by including different forms, such as poetry, prose, and academic writings (Browne, Connors, and Stern, 1985; Fine and Asch, 1988; Keith, 1996; Willmuth and Holcomb, 1993). There are international anthologies by women with disabilities that attempt to incorporate race and class (Driedger and Gray, 1992; Driedger, Feika, and Batres, 1996), an anthology that proudly declares to be the efforts of "disabled dykes" to "produce culture" (Tremain, 1996), and even memoirs by women with disabilities (i.e., Jamison, 1995).[13]

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[12] Wade specifically condemns the exploitive nature of Goodwill's sheltered workshops, which employ persons with disabilities, p. 38.

[13] Kay Redfield Jamison provides a perfect example of the importance of a disability perspective in research - as providing an insider perspective on a specific disability to enrich research and lived experience. She is the foremost expert on manic-depressive disorder (also called bipolar disorder) and has the disorder herself. Her memoir (1995) relates her complex experience with manic-depressive illness - the frightening psychosis and depression, but also the energy, creativity, and depth of emotion she gained from the illness that made it difficult to stay on medication that dulled these gains. Jamison (1993) has raised awareness about the links between manic-depressive disorder and creativity in artists and musicians, in an attempt to destigmatize the disorder and highlight its positive attributes. She has also clearly shown herself to be an active and accomplished person with a disability.

Rosemarie Thomson's feminist cultural analysis of the "disabled figure" provides a strategy to dissolve dualistic ways of viewing difference and to capture a more complex view of disability. Thomson discusses the idea of any deviant Other as inherently defined as outside what she calls "the normate": " the social figure through which people can represent themselves as definitive human beings" against "the array of deviant others whose bodies shore up the normate's boundaries" (p. 8). This cultural idea of what is normal, she writes, is so bound up with the social order, that it only describes a very narrow minority of actual people. Thomson argues that the normate can only be uncovered, though, when analyses examine:

> the social processes and discourses that constitutes physical and cultural otherness. Because figures of otherness are highly marked in power relations, even as they are marginalized, their cultural visibility as deviant obscures and naturalizes the normative figure that they legitimate (p. 8-9).

Thomson herself scrutinizes ideas about disability by examining American cultural discourses of liberal individualism and attitudes about the body, gender, and race in historical context. While she examines literature as an aspect of these processes, the media clearly are also a powerful site of the construction and distribution of cultural meanings about the body, normalcy, and difference that also need to be analyzed using such an approach.

Directions for media research

After this preliminary exploration of feminist and disability literature, I envision two areas where a disability perspective may inform research - in the realms of media representations, as well as in the journalistic and academic workplaces. I see a great potential for such research to reconnect representations and workers with the complex reality of the body by uncovering the cultural and journalistic processes that shape treatment of the body. There is some research on media representations of disability, but I've found none yet that are feminist approaches. Also, I've found no academic research on newsworkers or journalism faculty and students with disabilities. So, clearly these are areas in need of exploration by feminist researchers.

Media representation

Studies have found that people with disabilities are ridiculed, medicalized and marginalized in their portrayals in media and literature (i.e., Clogston, 1989; Longmore, 1996; Saad, 1996). John Clogston (1989) found that most studies on media representations and persons with disabilities tended to be atheoretical and conducted by rehabilitation or education specialists - with few studies done by communication researchers. He uncovers six frameworks that have grounded inquiry into portrayals of persons with disabilities. Four of the frameworks - normative deviance theory, labeling theory, medical model of disability, and social pathological model of disability - all portray persons with disability in a negative fashion. Under these models, persons with disabilities are portrayed as deviants from a normative cultural standard of health and as dependent on society. The two remaining frameworks, which Clogston advocates, portray persons with disabilities in a more positive and realistic fashion - minority group theory and, flowing from that, the minority/civil rights model of disability. These two frameworks assume that persons with disabilities have less power because of "society's unwillingness to open up physically and attitudinally" to them (p. 24).

Persons with disabilities have expressed their outrage at the lack of media coverage they receive and of the narrow stereotypes when covered - usually within the medical/social pathology model. An oppositional binary of Supercrip, or "heroic cripple," is played against the Tiny Tim, or "pitiable cripple," leaving little room for the reality of the diversity of the disability community (Johnson, 1993; Shapiro, 1994).[14] Men and women with disabilities are often show as weak and sexless (Finger, 1993) - unless they are shown as " overcoming" their disabilities by coming closer to nondisabled standards of beauty and health. In his study of advertising, Paul Longmore (1996) dissects a Budweiser ad that shows an attractive male athlete in his wheelchair. While some disability advocates applauded the positive image, Longmore writes that not only does the actor conform to nondisabled images of health and beauty, he is shown with a beautiful, nondisabled girlfriend.

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[14] Language that is demeaning, or that focuses on the disability dehumanizes people with disabilities - which is why the disability rights movement prefers "people first" language that stresses the person, not the disability (Shapiro, 1994). This is why I have chosen the longer "persons with disabilities," instead of "the disabled" throughout this paper.

Mary Johnson (1993), editor of The Disability Rag, blasts the media for ignoring the disability rights movement and for these narrow stereotypes.[15] Johnson also points out that disability issues are usually seen as only fit for features - similar to the coverage of women's issues - while more complex news stories on the discrimination people with disabilities face are ignored. In fact, Johnson writes, one reporter was told by an editor that they'd already done their disability story for the year (1993, p. 106). Susan LoTempio, a lifestyles editor at the Buffalo (N.Y.) News, agrees with Johnson. LoTempio, who has a disability, has herself been stereotypically covered as a "wonderful crippled woman" in features. She says she had difficulties getting her editors to cover disability issues as hard news, until the passage of the ADA in 1990 (John, 1991).

Clogston (1993) has found a small shift in American newspaper coverage from traditional stereotypical disability topics to civil rights-related issues, in the past two decades - clearly suggesting a shift in representation as other cultural and historical factors surrounding disability changed. Again, attention to these historical and cultural processes provide the potential to move beyond merely discussing stereotypes. This is why Rosemarie Thomson prefers to study the representations of what she calls "disabled figures" in literature to specifically unpack the cultural and historical processes involved in creating such images of people with disabilities. Considering the "disabled figure" within these processes may offer a more complex, fruitful paradigm for disability media research.

The disability rights movement has, like other civil rights movements, spawned its own publications to empower and strengthen the identities of persons with disabilities. Nelson (1996) argues that these publications provide a sense of identity for the disability community by promoting a sense of worth, providing information relevant to disability concerns (i.e., assistive technology, legal advice), and promoting activism. These alternative publications provide models of more complex, disability centered coverage and, I believe, are also a rich source for studies on interlocking issues in women's identity and oppression.

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[15] The Disability Rag is now called The Ragged Edge.

Women with disabilities argue that their issues need to be presented in a more disability-centered and complex fashion (Fine and Asch, 1988; Morris, 1991; Buckman, 1995). For example, there has been a lot of focus on reproductive technology and women's right to abort fetuses with disabilities.[16] However, to many women with disabilities, a more important issue is the right to have children - a right nondisabled women may take for granted (Finger, 1993). By ignoring the perspective of women with disabilities, journalists miss this important reality. I offer two other examples of interlocking identity and disability issues that have specifically been dealt with in alternative disability media that provide a more complex picture of women with disabilities.

The case of Sharon Kowalski and her paralysis after a car accident combines issues of sexism, heterosexism, and ableism - and, as such, drew the attention of the disability and gay rights communities. Kowalski was unable to speak orally, and her ability to speak through typing was not seen as showing mental competence. Her father was granted custody and refused to allow Kowalski's partner, Karen Thompson, visitation - suggesting Thompson might sexually abuse Kowalski (Griscom, 1992). This case held the interest of the disability publications, such as The Disability Rag and Mouth. However, it also attracted the attention of gay/lesbian rights alternative publications, because of the gay rights issues involved (i.e., Schmitz, 1991; Nealon, 1991).

With the poverty women - especially women of color - suffer as they age, the complex issues of their own disability and the issues of caretaking of parents and children with disabilities should be considered, as well (Older Women's League, 1995; Rich, 1995; Myerhoff, 1995):

> Women, once disabled, are less likely to be employed, have life partners, or receive quality rehabilitation services than disabled men. Women outnumber men in nursing homes eight to one. Women whose children are disabled live in poverty, because they have to be poor to qualify for Medicaid, and because many of their husbands cut and run (Pelka, p. 39).

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[16] Feminist anthropologist Rayna Rapp (1991), who studies this complex decision-making process, argues that analyses are needed "from the perspective of women and their families in which reproductive rights will not be pitted against disability rights" (p. 393).

An analysis of these interlocking issues of class, race, gender, disability, and age needs to capture the complexity of this lived reality. For example, in an issue of The Disability Rag focusing on disability and mid-life issues, Buckman (1995) reminds us of a more "positive" aspect of disability and aging - that women with disabilities may have a great deal to teach nondisabled women about aging: "When the disabled women reached mid-life, they already knew physical loss. Often, their experience of mid-life transition was described as more satisfactory than that of their nondisabled peers" (p. 21).

This view of people with disabilities as more active agents in cultural life may open a space for studies of interaction between them and the media - and between them and the work culture. Viewing persons with disabilities as more active and complex affects how they will be seen in the work world, since traditional and governmental definitions of disability excluded the possibility that persons with disabilities could work.

Disability and the workforce (journalistic & academic)

> Nowhere is the disabled figure more troubling to American ideology and history than in relation to the concept of work: the system of production and distribution of economic resources in which the abstract principles of self-government, self-determination, autonomy, and progress are manifest most completely (Thomson, p. 46).

This area of work and disability holds the most interest for me as someone disabled in the newsroom. In the metaphor of shifting spectrums of oppression and identity, I have found myself sliding down the socioeconomic scale immediately and taken less seriously because of my disability and the inability of the persons in the work culture to accommodate me.

Our society has the image of persons with disabilities as unable to work. Thomson calls labor "the definitive creed of Puritan through contemporary America," which equates work with moral virtue and "idleness with depravity" (p. 47). Paupers were held accountable - and still are - for their poverty, for not working hard enough. However, Thomson argues that the issue of disability is in conflict with this creed, because it "calls into question such concepts as will, ability, progress, responsibility, and free agency, notions around which people in a liberal society organize their identities" (p. 47).

Thus, the existence of people with disabilities forced society to consider who should be held responsible for "earning a living" and who "should be released from that expectation because of circumstances beyond one's control" (Thomson, p. 47). This distinction, Thomson writes, clarifies for society "those deemed unable to work and those deemed unwilling to work" (p. 49). Through this definitional process, people with disabilities became the "deserving poor," or what Thomson calls the "sick poor," who deserved aid. Granting this exemption from work for persons with disabilities, Thomson believes, is viewed as an act of mercy. However, it also excludes persons with disabilities from the work culture so central to American life:

> Thus, the moral generosity that seeks to compensate for physical differences makes cultural outcasts of its recipients by assuming that individual bodies must conform to institutional standards, rather than restructuring the social environment to accommodate physical variety (Thomson, p. 51).

Through similar cultural processes, women historically have also been defined as the "deserving poor" and "unable" to work, while persons of color have been portrayed as "unwilling" to work (Jewell, 1993). These cultural definitions have negatively affected societal images of these groups and their relationship to labor. Thus, any study of work and disability should consider these interlocking issues.

Of course, the issue here is whether persons with disabilities are really unable to work, or if society is keeping them from working, which maintains an image of unemployed disabled persons. Discrimination in employment is an enormous problem for persons with disabilities, according to Shapiro.[17] It is rare that companies say outright that they won't hire a person with a disability, according to Shapiro. But the employment figures make it clear that there is employment bias where persons with disabilities are

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[17] He cites the 1994 Harris poll, which shows that only one-third of persons with disabilities have jobs, while 79 percent of the rest "say they can work and would like to work, ... but they are prevented from doing so because, ... they face discrimination in hiring or lack of transportation" (p. 27). When persons with disabilities do have jobs, Shapiro argues, they earn less than their coworkers and are less likely to be promoted. He also cites a study by William Johnson, an economist at Syracuse University, showing that men with disabilities make 15 percent less than their nondisabled coworkers, while women with disabilities made 30 percent less. Shapiro shows through census data that this gap is growing: "A disabled worker in 1987 made only 64 percent of what his nondisabled colleagues earned. In 1980, it was 77 percent" (p. 28).

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concerned. "Those who do not work collect federal disability and welfare checks, costing nearly $60 billion a year"(Shapiro, p. 27-28). However, there is a clear double-bind: people with disabilities "have access to inadequate resources because they are unemployed or underemployed, and they are unemployed or underemployed because they lack the resources that would enable them to make their full contribution to society" (Wendell, 1989, p. 108).

The ADA was created to help prevent such a catch-22. Pelka notes that the ADA marks a radical change in how disability is treated by society by helping persons with disabilities in the areas of access, societal prejudice, and employment discrimination (p. 36). However, John Callahan (1993), a cartoonist and writer who is a paraplegic, writes that welfare rules still make it hard for persons with disabilities to work. His caseworker threatened him with loss of benefits when he was honest about his earnings, and she began to visit more frequently.[18]

Seeking the perspectives and experiences of persons with disabilities in the journalistic workforce and academia may help dispel the myth of persons with disabilities as unable to work - raising awareness about prejudice in these workplaces. Susan LoTempio, the lifestyles editor discussed earlier, says she was advised by an editor against a newspaper career, because he believed her disability - which requires her to use a wheelchair - would prevent her from getting a job in journalism (John, 1991). Other journalists with disabilities who use wheelchairs say they were encouraged to take more sedentary jobs like copy editing (Sanchez-Ramirez, 1991). These attitudes are not only discriminatory, but limiting to journalists with disabilities and to their colleagues.

John Hockenberry, an award-winning correspondent for National Public Radio, surprised his bosses and colleagues in Washington, D.C., when he showed up for the first time at NPR's headquarters. Those who had never met him didn't know that he is a paraplegic, from a spinal injury acquired in a car accident about 20 years ago (Hockenberry, 1995). "How, his fellow correspondent wondered, had a man in a wheelchair managed to cover political races or the exploding Mt. Saint Helens volcano?" (Shapiro, p. 19). Shapiro notes that Hockenberry's bosses realized that they might not have given him those assignments if they had known of his disability, assuming he would be unable to cover them. Shapiro calls this the Hockenberry Rule: "The only thing that could have kept Hockenberry from being an accomplished reporter would have been the paternalistic assumptions of his colleagues" (p. 19).

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[18] His caseworker also questions him about the frequent repairs needed to his wheelchair, repairs he needs because he uses his wheelchair frequently in his work - repairs that Callahan says he can't find money to have done properly. He argues that there is no way to gradually shift off welfare, as someone who is free-lancing.

This inability to integrate the complex, physical realities of work and the body has helped foster, I believe, the current epidemic of disability from work itself - repetitive strain injuries (RSI) in computer workplaces, such as the newsroom. Because RSI is a work-caused injury, it calls into question societal notions of what is appropriate work for "normal" human bodies.[19] RSI as a disability is actually a "biological reality" caused by these "social constructions" of what is seen as work for normal bodies. Dr. Emil Pascarelli (1994), an RSI expert, argues that quick fixes like ergonomic equipment and voice computers aren't enough to prevent RSI - which is 100 percent preventable - unless the organization of work itself is changed to provide more variety in work activities. So, the agenda with RSI is slightly different - instead of focusing merely on accommodation after-the-fact of this disability, the issue should be preventing RSI from occurring through changing the organization of work tasks.

Newspapers, with at least 2,300 cases of reported work-related RSIs, are 32nd on the 1994 Bureau of Labor Statistics' list of industries reporting RSI disorders. However, studies show that RSIs are under- reported (Hembree and Sandoval, 1991).[20] Because the increasing incidence of RSI in newsworkers is my area of interest, I'd like to use this as a brief example of how a researcher might put this feminist disability framework into practice by examining a particular image of a newsworker with RSI.

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[19] Dr. Emil Pascarelli and journalist Deborah Quilter (1994) write that RSI, also called Cumulative Trauma Disorder or CTD, is caused by a number of factors in today's workplace: repetitive duties, forced work pace, strained, static postures (such as sitting for eight hours at a computer, or standing at an assembly line) and a "deconditioned" workforce (meaning workers who are not initially physically fit). These factors all strain muscles and tendons, causing microscopic tears in tendons and injuring muscles, which decreases range of motion, causes pain and can lead to permanent soft tissue and nerve damage. RSI affects more than 700,000 workers a year and accounts for $1 of every $3 spent on workers compensation, according to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration ("OSHA scales back...," 1995).

[20] In the newsroom where I was injured, newsworkers chose not to report their RSIs because they were uninformed about reporting procedures, because they feared discrimination, and because they had good health insurance and had no wish to grapple with the workers compensation system.

Putting theory into practice: An example

The editorial cartoon image of a newsworker with RSI (see Appendix) combines the areas of media representation and of newsworkers with disabilities. This cartoon appeared in Editor & Publisher, a trade journal specifically targeted to journalists and journalistic management.[21] I hope to briefly point out and unpack some of the discourses that help constitute this image. In analyzing it, I must consider American medical practices, American work culture since industrialization[22], American journalistic work practices/culture, and other views of the body and work - including interlocking issues of gender and RSI.

The splints worn by the cartoon newsworker are emblematic of the failure of medicine and the newsroom to deal with RSI in a complex fashion. By putting RSI suffers in splints, the medical community attempts to control the body - as if healing and preventing RSI soft tissue damage and working conditions is as easy as setting a bone. I've even heard of one newsroom in the Midwest whose human resources department actually hands out wrist splints - a quick fix mentality for a complex issue.[23] To consider the complexity of the work culture that causes RSI, a discussion of work since industrialization is needed. Juliet Schor (1992), for example, traces the history of work and finds that the trends of industrialization and capitalism enhanced management control over workers body through increases in repetitive tasks and in work pace - to increase profit.[24]

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[21] The Jan. 4, 1997, issue, p. 80. I thank Beth Haller for sending this image to me.

[22] Which I refer to as "RSI work culture": a work culture that causes RSI. I also am working on a second idea of RSI work culture as the connections between workers with RSI - such as newsworkers using wrist splints, ice packs, and back pillows while sharing emotional support and information about their health care related to their RSI.

[23] Unfortunately, as Pascarelli writes, splints are actually usually harmful to wearers - causing muscles to atrophy and often causing more pain from awkward movements wearers must make to use them.

[24] Repetitive stress injuries are not a new phenomenon, according to Wolkomir (1994). He says that in 1713, scribes suffered from writer's cramp. However, "[w]ith industrialization, which demanded ceaseless iterations of precise arm and hand motions, strain injuries proliferated. Mostly, the crippled workers suffered silently" (p. 90). The assembly-line nature of industrial work has been affecting "blue collar" workers for some time. It's only within the last 10 years or so that we've even heard of repetitive stress

The salute the cartoon newsworker holds and the medal she wears as "the purple heart of journalistic soldiers" suggests that the American journalistic work culture itself needs to be interrogated. Jill Rackmill, who moved quickly through the ranks at "Dateline NBC" from intern to associate producer, first experienced RSI pain when she was 21 from her newswork. However, she says ignored it, because "journalism is a culture where you work through pain" (Burkitt, 1996) - a clear internalization of alienation from the body in a work culture that fosters RSI. Yet the romanticization of the journalistic culture - or what I call the "journalistic mystique" - through the war metaphor seems highly linked to this alienation of the body through hard work and hard play, as well as a sense of purpose from serving the country via liberal individual principles of informing the citizenry.

Lastly, this newsworker is clearly a white woman. How do discourses on gender and race related to newsworkers fit in? Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) show that journalists are still overwhelmingly white. As for gender, Barbara Zang (1991), in her research on carpal tunnel syndrome coverage and medical studies, found that RSI studies originally showed that women were more likely than men to get RSI - pointing to women's smaller wrists and hands as a factor. However, she found that more recent studies clarified this difference: women are more likely to be in lower-paying, lower level positions that require more repetitive work (whether clerical, assembly-line, etc.). When men are in the same positions, they have the same incidence of RSI. Zang's study reveals a gender bias in medical research, as well as the gender bias constructed in the structure of the workplace.

Like journalists, the proliferation of computers in universities has created a RSI problem for faculty and students who use them to write, e-mail, and explore sources on the Internet (Rimer, 1997) - an examination of journalism schools is clearly needed, as well. Since I've returned to academia from the newsroom, I've found a disturbing trend toward glorifying the potential of these technologies, with no consideration for the danger they pose for RSI. I see an unhealthy cycle of denial from the journalism school to the newsroom, and back to the journalism school when journalists such as myself become

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injuries, because of the introduction of the computer to the "white collar" workplace - clearly a workplace that affects more middle- to upper-class workers.

injured and leave the newsroom to pursue further education.[25] As students and faculty at a university and in a journalism program, we should be taught ergonomics and other healthy work behaviors - as well as advocating for change in the journalistic and academic workplaces regarding repetitive workload guidelines (see also Jackson, 1992).[26]

I hope this brief example on RSI makes clear the problems of ignoring the reality of physical limits of any body - and the benefits to be gained by incorporating critical consideration of physical difference into research analysis and the newsroom. While I've focused a great deal on RSI, research needs to make visible the realities of persons with different disabilities in the newsroom and university. How are they creating their own accommodations and ways of doing newswork and research? I've found that the best accommodation experts are persons with disabilities themselves, who - by necessity - must think outside traditional "boxes" of how things have always been done.

Conclusion: Thinking outside the box

The agenda I've suggested is by no means the only areas open for more feminist research on disability. While I described some of the negative aspects of technology and disability with RSI, technology clearly has given most people with disabilities a voice: for example, closed-captioning (Borchert, 1996) and the communication, employment, and virtual community aspects of the Internet (Nelson, 1995) are merely two types of technology that have been beneficial to people with disabilities. The technologies involved in universal design of buildings, including automatic doors and wheelchair ramps, can benefit everyone - including persons without disabilities.

In a recent lecture, John Hockenberry[27] stressed the importance of including disability culture to not only empower people with disabilities, but enhance the lives of people without disabilities by creating connections to act as a point of cultural translation.

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[25] In a preliminary ethnographic study of the student newspaper at the University of Iowa, I've found that the student journalists are already harming their bodies through lack of sleep, lack of food, and development of pain from overwork. However, these student journalists are being socialized into a journalistic work culture that romanticizes overwork and liberal ideals of providing information to the citizenry.

[26] For example, Harvard and MIT are creating RSI support groups, information on RSI at freshman orientation, and monthly lectures on RSI (Rimer, 1997).

[27] University of Iowa, March 18, 1997.

This process of cultural translation, he argues, would help nondisabled culture value the cultural and bodily diversity and adaptation that people with disabilities experience every day. By creating these connections, it becomes clear that the disability community has something to give back to society. Feminist scholars are often the first to help recover voices that have been unheard or ignored. The opportunity is here for feminist media scholarship to further enhance the education and lives of students, journalists, and faculty by including the perspectives of people with disabilities.

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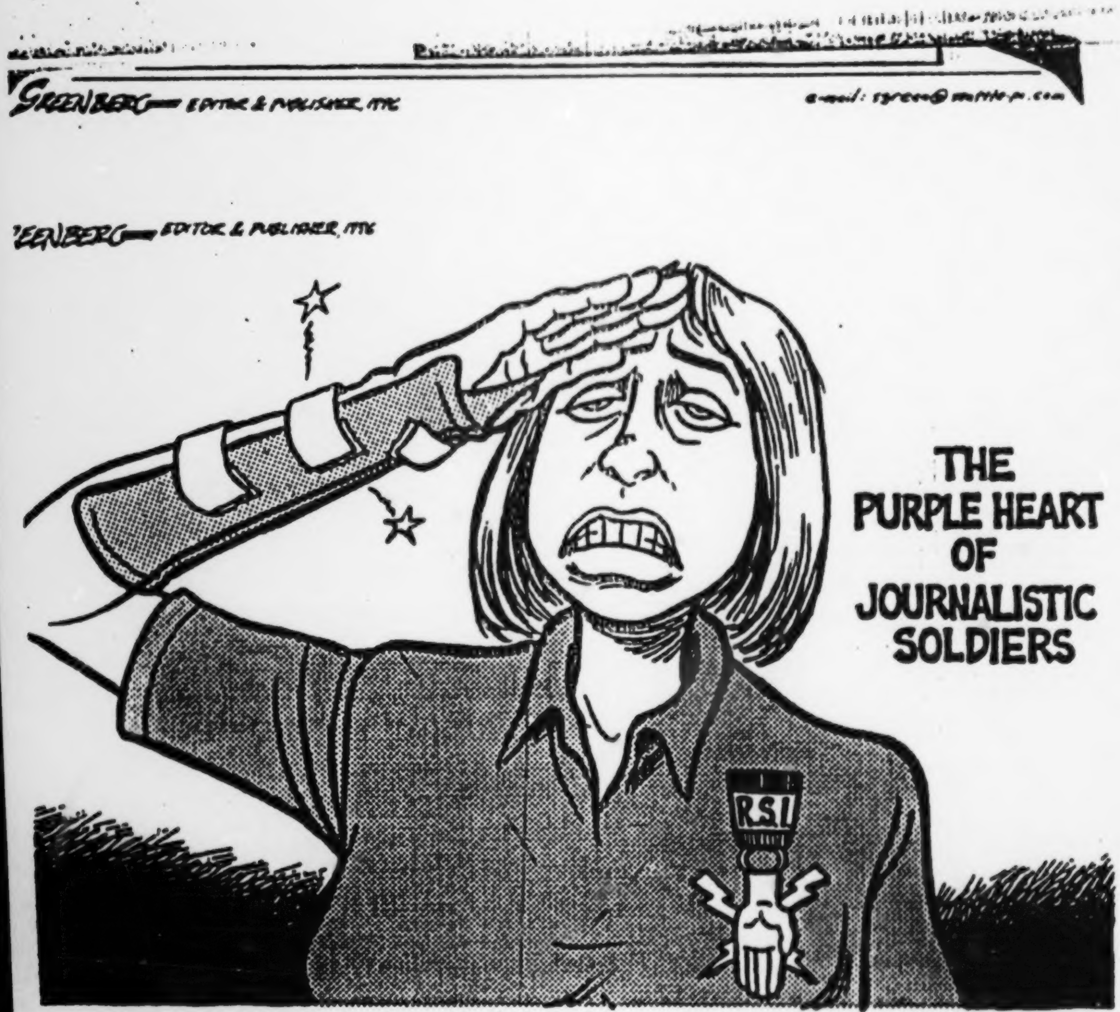
APPENDIX:
IMAGE OF NEWSWORKER WITH RSI


GREENBERG — EDITOR & PUBLISHER, 1996
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THE PURPLE HEART OF JOURNALISTIC SOLDIERS
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Running Head: THE DISABILITY CULTURE

From Pity to Pride:
People with disabilities, The media, and An Emerging Disability Culture

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Introduction

1996 was the presidential election year in the United States. A Republican nominated senator, Bob Dole, appeared in the media almost every day. Senator Dole is a war hero from World War II and has a paralyzed right arm. As a presidential candidate, the media extensively displayed his pictures, including his paralyzed right.

Although he is not the first famous politician with a disability in the U.S. history, the media coverage of these politicians changed as time went by. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who acquired his polio during middle-age, is probably the most famous among politicians with a disability.

Despite the fact that Roosevelt traveled around the nation, like Dole, and also visited other countries while stricken with polio, the media coverage of Roosevelt was quite different from that of Dole. More than fifty years ago, under strict guidelines from the White House (in order to promote his "strength" as president), very few pictures of Roosevelt in a wheelchair or in braces remain today (Nelson, 1994). It was the time when disability was viewed as a symbol of sickness, deserving of pity, or being deviant -- exclusively negative. And times have changed. The presidential campaign of 1996 symbolizes the changes for people with disabilities.

The present paper assesses how the media has changed in terms of depicting people with disabilities, how people with disabilities have gained power through the media, and most importantly, how those changes have affected perceptions of people with disabilities themselves. In order to do so, the paper mentions several turning points with regard to people with disabilities and disability issues, such as the disability civil rights movement, the protest of the Gallaudet University students, and regulating the Americans with Disabilities Act. Finally, the study examines how other countries, such as Japan, are interrelated with the U.S. media through "global networks," and how the Japanese media has changed portrayals of people with disabilities.

From Pity to Pride

Before the 1970s, the terms "disability" and "handicap" were exclusively viewed from the medical perspective (Hahn, 1987). In a similar vein, up until the 1970s, people who possessed these characteristics of medical needs were considered to be sick and in need of others' charity and pity (Funk, 1987). One example of the medical and welfare model in the media is the Jerry Lewis telethon. The programs capture people with disabilities as "objects of pity" (Nelson, 1994, p. 5).

On the other hand, according to Longmore (1987), the second meaning of "disability" and people with disabilities denotes a certain notion of "in spite of his/her disability" -- stories of "supercrips" (a derivation of "super cripples"). Newspapers, TV news and dramas, and magazines promulgate these "supercrip" stories. The media prefer the "supercrip" stories because these stories contain "inspirationalism," which is somewhat analogous with "sensationalism" for the media. One example of this kind of depiction is a TV movie "The Terry Fox Story," which shows a young Canadian who crossed the nation despite having had one leg amputated (Nelson, 1994).

Although the "supercrip" model does not seem to have anything to do with the first one, the medical or welfare model, Shapiro (1994) notes that it "is the flip side of the pitiable poster child. It is just as hurtful, ... because it implies that a disabled person is presumed deserving of pity -- instead of respect -- until he or she proves capable of overcoming a physical or mental limitation through extraordinary feats" (p. 16).

Clogston (1990) calls these medical, charity, and "supercrip" models the traditional disability category. He also creates the progressive disability category (the minority/civil rights model, and the cultural pluralism model, and), which is opposed to the traditional category. The progressive category is based on an assertion that "the disabled" is made by societal prejudice, stereotypes, and/or architectural barriers. Later, Haller (1995) adds the "business model" to the traditional category, and the "legal model" and "consumer model" to the progressive category.

There are several common themes among these traditional models. First, these media depictions of people with disabilities imply that having disabilities is "their" fate and problem; therefore, it is "their" responsibility to overcome or deal with the disabilities. Traditional categories, in other words, pay less attention to "social" aspects of having disabilities such as people's prejudice, ignorance, and most importantly, the fact that they have rights like anyone else.

Second, in relation to the power of the media, people with disabilities in the traditional models are always objects *to be covered* by the media. It is always the media to decide when, where, and what to report about people with disabilities. In the traditional models, people with disabilities are passive, rather than active. This is because in the past, people with disabilities were not aware of their collective power and identity as a minority group that could later influence consumer markets, voting, and the media.

People with disabilities as minority: "Discrimination" as a bond

According to Braithwaite (1991), the number of people with disabilities is steadily increasing due to two reasons. One reason is the increasing aging population, and the other is an advanced medical technology. Having disabilities has become "not so special," but instead simply a fact of life. Shapiro (1994) notes that currently, nearly one in six Americans has some kind of disability. In his other book, "No Pity," Shapiro (1993) comments that this large but diverse population of people with disabilities is both a strength and weakness in relation to forming their own minority identity. Nevertheless, "all disabled people share one common experience - discrimination" (Shapiro, 1993, p. 24).

In addition, because of the long history of stigma of disability, while disability is not contagious, people try to avoid interactions with the stigmatized individuals as if stigma of disability *is* contagious. If a non-disabled person and a person in a wheelchair are proceeding toward each other on a street, the non-disabled person oftentimes yields his/her way as if it is too horrifying to see the person in a wheelchair coming toward him or her. This is even true among people with disabilities themselves (Goffman, 1963). Accordingly, Fisher and Galler (1988) state that "disabled people sometimes avoid each other to keep from being identified with disability or with a disability more harshly stigmatized than one's own" (p. 176). Moreover, the author's interview with a student with a disability confirms this kind of mentality. He said "No, I guess I prefer not to have any... I don't want any handicapped (friends)." These statements indicate that people with disabilities internalize negative perceptions of what others see in them. It is true that internalized self stigma of people with disabilities had hampered for a long time any project to unite them as a minority group until the disability civil rights movement started in the 1960s.

The Disability Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s: The Origin of the power

The disability rights movement was started along with outcries of other discriminated minority groups such as blacks, homosexuals, and females for an equal treatment (Funk, 1987). Funk (1987) carefully illustrates this era as the origin of today's glowing disability rights movement. During this time, people with disabilities started to form their organizations and coalitions beyond the boundaries of different disabilities because they were bonded by common interests. It is in this era that people with disabilities started to see themselves as "a class of people denied civil liberties," rather than simply a category of people (Funk, 1987, p. 16).

A watershed event occurred in April, 1977 (Funk, 1987; Shapiro, 1988). Disability activists occupied the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for 28 days to make sure the regulations were passed. After 20 years has passed since the incident, some of those demonstrators admit that they never had imagined the occupation incident would last almost a month (Ervin, 1997). But some groups of people with disabilities could not wait any longer. Judy Heumann, who has been one of the disability activist leaders and now works for the Clinton administration, spoke to the audience by saying, "I hope you brought your toothbrush" (Ervin, 1997, p. 1). Other minority people, such as the Black Panthers and a gay person, also showed their sympathy and support for the demonstration (Ervin, 1997).

By virtue of this incident, politicians and law makers had to realize that people with disabilities were beginning to have political influence. It was the beginning of the disability rights movement. The movement did not die during this era, but instead waited for a decade until the right time came. Under the surface, the grass-roots of the movement kept expanding.

The Deaf as a Culture: Proud to be the Deaf

Among all kinds of groups of people with disabilities, it is probably the deaf people who had had an awareness of their identity as "the Deaf" long before the time when the disability rights movement started. Nowadays, people with hearing impairments differentiate "the deaf" from "the Deaf." The former indicates people with hearing impairments, but they do not consider themselves as part of a cultural group (the Deaf). On the other hand, the Deaf people, who have hearing impairments and the Deaf culture, are aware of their identity as a minority group (Jankowski, 1991). Jankowski (1991) examines the Deaf culture in terms of the common language, nonverbal behavior, values, socializing patterns, and traditions. A Deaf student also testifies that "Deafness is not a handicap. It's a culture, a language, and I'm proud to be deaf" (Shapiro, 1993, p. 85).

Although the Deaf people have distinct characteristics of their own as the Deaf, the deaf (or the Deaf) and other people with disabilities share similar experiences such as being stereotyped, being discriminated against, and still struggling for equal rights. These shared feelings were heightened when the Deaf students at Gallaudet University closed down the school for a week demanding to have a deaf president for the first time in 124 years of that school's history. First, the university committee chose Dr. Zinser, who was the only hearing candidate among the three, and this decision set off protests by students and faculties of the school. Ransom (1995) calls this incident "the struggle of discourses between two cultures" (p. 148).

The Gallaudet University Protest and the Disability Rights Movements

When the Gallaudet students were protesting and the media were covering them, other people with disabilities in the nation, whether deaf or not, watched the reports with a feeling that "These students are fighting my fight" (Shapiro, 1988).

> Robinson... is not deaf. But she uses a wheelchair and knows a lot about the barriers thrown up to people with disabilities, about the patronizing attitudes of others, about the desire to show everyone, as the Gallaudet students did, that 'I can be who I am and make it in the world.' The Gallaudet protest week made Robinson a 'TV news junkie, flipping the channels up and down' to catch scenes - over and over - of Gallaudet students signing, en masse, for a 'Deaf President Now.' 'It was' she says, 'one of the most poignant moments of my life.'" (Shapiro, 1988, p. 19).

This description indicates several significant points. First, it illustrates how people with disabilities see other groups of people with disabilities. They see their pains and victories as their own (as Robinson said that the students' victory was "one of the most poignant moments of my life") and identify with them. A Harris poll illustrates this "their-fight-is-my-fight" sentiment. According to the poll, over 70% of American people with disabilities say that they share a "common identity" with other people with disabilities, and 45% of them agree with the idea that people with disabilities are a minority group like racial minorities (such as blacks and Hispanics).

Secondly, Shapiro's article indicates that the media, especially the visual ones, played an important role in forming the sense of commonality among people with various disabilities. Without the media coverage of the protest, other people with disabilities in the nation across couldn't "catch scenes," which were happening in far away places. Through the media, they could feel others' fights and victories as it was happening. In other words, the media, especially TV, bridged among people with disabilities as a group that shared a common interest, regardless of their different disabilities.

In a similar vein, behind the camera, the Gallaudet students were clearly conscious about how they were covered by the media and what kind of messages they were sending to others, especially those with disabilities. They knew that the media was the key for their battle. They were angry, but disciplined, and this fact made the media report the protest favorably for the students (Haller, 1991; Ramson, 1995). Many conferences were held on campus, volunteer interpreters bridged communication barriers between the media and the protesters, and these stories were aired nationally and internationally (Haller, 1991).

As a result, the protesters could receive an outpouring of donations and supporting letters from viewers (Shapiro, 1993). In addition, other Deaf students outside of Washington D.C. also responded quickly. Some rallied in their places and others even flew to campus to support the protest after watching the reports (Shapiro, 1993). In sum, the Gallaudet case has a significance in that people with disabilities, the Deaf students, succeeded in using the media to send messages that they wanted to convey, rather than being depicted passively by the media.

The Gallaudet effects have been felt beyond the campus. Overall, "Gallaudet gave Americans a new rights consciousness about disability" (Shapiro, 1993, p. 75). More specifically, journalism started to tell more stories of people with disabilities in the progressive models than the traditional models (Haller, 1991).

But most of all, it was not coincidental that only few years after the protest of the Gallaudet students, a significant law for all people with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed. Faculties of the university noted that King Jordan, who became the president after the protest, could give influential testimony at ADA hearings (Ransom, 1995). ADA, which is meant to be the law for all people with disabilities, was passed with the help of a favorable wind -- the protest of the Deaf.

ADA, Politics, and the Media:
People with disabilities as a Political Force

1988 was a presidential election year. Shapiro (1993) illustrates how votes from people with disabilities changed the situation for Bush and later, how ADA was regulated. In May of that year, disability activists gathered together and decided to focus on the presidential campaign. Regardless of their differences in political beliefs, again, they had a common goal, which was getting an acknowledgment of rights for people with disabilities.

It was Bush who pledged first by saying "I'm going to do whatever it takes to make sure the disabled are included in the mainstream" (Shapiro, 1993, p. 124). As soon as people with disabilities heard his pledges, many of them switched their support to Bush. As a result, Bush gained two million votes from these switched voters.

In addition to their political purposes, some of politicians had personal motives to pass ADA (Shapiro, 1989b). Bush has two sons with disabilities and lost his daughter to leukemia at age 3. Edward Kennedy has a sister with a mental retardation and a son who lost his leg. Weicker, who first introduced the ADA to the Congress, has a son with Down's syndrome. These are the people who *know* the life of people with disabilities. Moreover, some others have disabilities themselves. Senator Dole has a disabled arm and Tony Coelho has epilepsy. They *are* the life of people with disabilities. Indeed, most of the ablebodied have friends, relatives or family members with disabilities. Thus, even for the many ablebodied, ADA is not just a law, but a personal matter.

And on July 26, 1990, Bush signed the ADA. ADA consists of four section: employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The law protects legal rights of people with disabilities in these areas, and it promises an equal access for them (House of Representatives, 1990). This was the day when people with disabilities and people around them won what they have desired for so long: the acknowledgment of the rights of people with disabilities.

Since ADA was passed, there have been steady changes in the media coverage of people with disabilities. As stated before, the basic difference between a traditional and progressive model is that the former sees that it is people with disabilities that have problems, while the later type of articles, progressive, shed light on "society's inability or unwillingness to adapt its physical, social, and occupational environments to accommodate all of its members [people with disabilities]" (Clogston, 1994, p. 46).

Both Clogston (1994) and Haller (1995) agree with a new trend of media coverage of people with disabilities: slowly but surely, the media started to focus on the "progressive" perspectives of people with disabilities, rather than "traditional" ones. When the author was in the U.S. in 1985-1986, TV commercials using people with disabilities were almost nonexistent. Nevertheless, as Rabinovitz (1991) also notices, today, people with disabilities have gained roles in TV commercials and print advertisements. Rabinovitz (1991) says that companies and ad industries have recognized people with disabilities as an untapped consumer block. One TV ad even had no sound, but just a Deaf actress, Marlee Matlin, signing with pride to an audience with captions at the bottom of the screen.

Clogston (1992), who studied issues of *The New York Times* dating back 50 years, points out that the trend seems to start since 1976. According to Clogston (1994), two factors are especially influential in changing the tone of coverage of people with disabilities. One of them is whether the newspaper uses newsroom style guidelines regarding disability coverage and another is whether the reporter had a co-worker with a disability. It seems the later factor is more important because "diversity is worth doing. Diversity is what your newspapers are all about," says John Hockenberry, who is a radio reporter and uses a wheelchair (Breiski, 1994, p. 82).

The Media and International Communication: Beyond boundaries

An impact of the U.S. media coverage of people with disabilities such as ADA and disability rights movements beyond the border cannot be ignored. This impact is due to nations being "wired" to each other, and any occurrence in one nation can be sent to the rest of the world in a matter of seconds. People in other countries have also observed what have happened in the U.S. through the media. Though the news, commercials, or imported entertainment, such as TV dramas, from the U.S., people in other countries may become familiar with seeing people with disabilities.

For example, Japan imports a great amount of American TV dramas and commercials. When the author was in Japan, she watched "Life Goes On." It was astonishing for her because before the program was showed in the country, Japan had not had any *regular* program that had a main character with disability. Almost all popular American dramas, from "Cosby Show" to "Beverly Hills 90210" are aired in Japan. "Beverly Hills 90210" has an episode dealing with a young man who is a paraplegic and wants to have a date with Kelly, who is one of main characters in the show. The episode illustrates how frustrating it is for a person with disability to be patronized by others and how a person with disability can be isolated because of architecture barriers. This episode must have been viewed by Japanese audience. The author also noticed that there is a person in a wheelchair in the newsroom background of "Murphy Brown." Although she never has a line or a single shot by herself, the audience sees her working in a busy newsroom as they view the show. "Murphy Brown" is also aired in Japan. In addition, most American movies are showed at Japanese theaters.

Berger (1992) notes that American media influence has a tremendous impact on Third-World countries because it is cheaper for them to buy American programs than producing their own. These examples indicate that changes in a country, especially in a leading media nation such as the U.S., also affect other countries sooner or later because of "global networks" (Korzenny & Schiff, 1992 p. 5). Accordingly, Smith (1992) theorizes the media-networking model.

> The operational task can be thought of as forming, or utilizing existing, local networks, which are connected to the global network via mass media. The mass media serve to explore new populations with information, which motivates public interest and raises consciousness, increasing the size of, and interaction within, the global network (p. 204).

Therefore, as the U.S. media depicts people with disabilities such as in commercials, dramas, or movies, it is also distributed to other countries through "global networks." Consequently and most importantly, it possibly changes local people's perceptions of people with disabilities.

Recently, Japan has started producing several regular programs with people with disabilities and they have made a great sensation. This trend of making the programs seems to be prompted by the Hanshin/Awaji earthquake, which caused devastating damage in 1955. Nevertheless, the author assumes that the Japanese have been accustomed to seeing people with disabilities in the entertainment media even before the earthquake. In other words, there may have been a foundation within the Japanese people to make them feel less uncomfortable seeing people with disabilities in the entertainment media.

Interestingly, during the year of 1995, some Japanese TV dramas illustrated stories of people with disabilities. According to the poll taken by a teenager magazine, *Seventeen*, among the 10 most watched TV drams, there were three dramas which depicted people with disabilities as one of main characters. These were ***Ai shite iru to ittekure*** (Say "I Love You") (the 1st), *Miseinen* (The underage) (the 2nd), and *Hoshi no kinka* (The coins of the stars) (the 5th). Main characters in the two drams of the three (*Ai shite iru to ittekure* and *Hoshi no kinka)* had hearing impairments.

Ai shite iru to ittekure was the most popular Japanese drama in 1995, and 96 people of 270 voted for this (*Seventeen*, 1995). This fictional drama depicted the love story between a painter with a hearing impairment, Koji, and a young actress, Hiroko. Unlike other Japanese dramas, the drama captioned the lines for both the deaf and the ablebodied audiences.

Although the drama was made for the entertainment, it also was educational for people without hearing impairments in many ways. First, the drama successfully depicted an everyday life of a deaf person, Koji, who lives by himself, communicates with the ablebodied by writing, and has a romantic relationship with Hiroko, who is the ablebodied. The drama also introduced many items that are used by deaf people, such as a trembling alarm clock or a flash light on the ceiling which substitutes for a doorbell. In addition, the drama illustrated social discrimination toward a deaf person. Koji's landlord openly showed her discrimination by saying "You never know what might happen if a deaf lives alone." Koji once told Hiroko how painful it was to be taunted by others when he used the sign language. Most of all, many hearing audiences learned some simple sign languages such as "I believe in you" or "I love you," or became interested in the sign language. A girl, who voted for the drama in the magazine, says "Each morning after the drama was aired, we tried sign languages at the school," and another noted that she went to a class to learn the sign language (*Seventeen*, p. 118).

When the author returned to Japan in 1996, she witnessed many books of the sign language, which were occupying a large space at several book stores. This incident indicates that the sign language has been acknowledged by the Japanese and still learnt by people without hearing impairments. It is very possible that these fictional popular dramas depicting people with disabilities have changed the Japanese people's perception toward people with disabilities.

The example above illustrates how the Japanese media has portrayed people with disabilities and its impact on the locals and society. It still is not clear if viewing American drams or movies has ever proceeded to make a foundation for the Japanese to be accustomed to viewing people with disabilities in the media. Nevertheless, one thing clear is that the stream of "global networking" does not stop in Japan. It is well known that many Japanese TV drams and movies are imported by other Asian media such as Chinese, Taiwanese, Malaysian, or Korean. The youngsters in those countries are especially active in watching the Japanese entertainment programs. They might be influenced while watching the drams such as *Ai shite iru to itte kure,* and a new consciousness toward people with disabilities might be formed within their societies.

While there have been some positive influences from the Japanese media, it never is enough. For example, the total time of Japanese programs with telecaptions is still very small. In 1992, Japan Broadcasting Corp. (the Japanese public television network) had only 10.5 hours of programs with telecaptions *per a week* (Mogi, 1992). Five years later, the network aired more than 4 hours of programs with telecaptions in *a day,* according to *Asahi Shimbun* (the Asahi Newspaper) on April 22nd. It seems a great progress. However, the content of these programs, which are chosen to be telecaptioned, was the exactly the same from five years ago: "samurai dramas and cartoons rather than serious programming like documentaries or the news" (Mogi, 1992, p. 441). Moreover, the situation of five private stations, which is worse than public network's, has not changed since 1992. On April 22nd, the total time of telecaptioned programs by 5 private stations was only 30 minutes (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1997). Four out of five private stations had no telecaptioned programs on this day. On the other hand, according Mogi (1992), even five years ago, five U.S. stations aired an weekly average of 215 hours of programs with telecaptions.

Mogi (1992) contends that this huge gap between two nations is due to different financing situations for the telecaption service. While the cost of telecaptioning is covered by the government and donations in the U.S., it is paid by the stations in Japan. Indeed, the telecaptioning service may cost some to the stations, but so is the bilingual service. The total time of bilingual programs (either dubbed with English or Japanese) on April 22nd was more than seven hours (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1997). This fact implies that Japanese TV stations could provide the services regardless of the cost. Many of the viewers of bilingual programs seem to be people who do not understand the Japanese, and native Japanese, who want to study English by listening to bilingual programs. A main difference between telecaptioned programs and bilingual programs is the content of these programs. Except those foreign dramas or movies dubbed with Japanese, all bilingual programs are the news programs.

While a number of telecaptioned programs for people with hearing impairments is still limited; especially since the earthquake in 1995, programs *about* people with disabilities in a real life, such as documentaries, seem to have become popular in Japan. However, the way of depicting people with disabilities in these programs should be cautioned. In Japan, terms frequently used to describe or advertise these programs are “touching,” “moving,” and/or “a tearing story.” In other words, most of these programs are “supercrip” stories, which illustrate people with disabilities as inspirational.

Consequently, the audience seems to be influenced by the media. One of the viewers, who watched a documentary program about a deaf couple and their son without a hearing impairment, sent a letter to *Asahi Shimbun*. She said, "I always wonder why those people with disabilities could be more generous, courageous, and have more prides than the albebodied" (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1997, April 17). It is not true that all people with disabilities are overachievers. It is rather damaging to promote the notion that people with disabilities are special and/or good in nature, instead of that they are ordinary people who happened to have disabilities. In Japan, because ablebodied people have less chances to see or interact with people with disabilities on everyday basis than people in the U.S., they are more likely to be influenced their perceptions about people with disabilities by the media. (One of the frequent comments from people, who have been to the U.S., is that they were surprised to see people with disabilities all the time at the public places while staying in the country.) Therefore, the content of these programs of people with disabilities, as well as the quantity, should be studied more fully in Japan.

Category or Culture

As mentioned before, according to the survey done in 1986, there was already "an emerging group consciousness" (Harris et al, p. 9) among people with disabilities in the U.S. The survey indicates that even before ADA was regulated, there was a sign of an emerging culture. Also, *The Disability Rag,* once asked their readers about common terms referring "the disabled" in 1987. Mary Johnson, who was an editor, noticed that "common language and culture was starting to emerge within the disability rights movement" because "responses were remarkably consistent" (Johnson, 1994, p. 27). The question still must be answered: Is "the disabled" a mere category or culture?

A national survey shows that a group of people with disabilities tend to be in a lower social class than the population in general, and their equal rights tend to be violated in social, educational, and occupational environments (House of Representatives, 1990). Liachowitz (1988) comments that in order to register a law for people with disabilities, lawmakers must have a "conception of disability as a social construct" (p. 1). Further, Haller (1995) elaborates that laws such as ADA admit that, consciously or unconsciously, there is a social structure or social caste to which many people with disabilities belong. Geertz (1973) explains about social structure and culture as follows.

> Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations. Culture and social structure are then but different abstractions from the same phenomena. The one considers social action in respect to its meaning for those who carry it out, the other considers it in terms of its contribution to the functioning of some social system (Geertz, p. 145).

Therefore, this is how "people with disabilities" is different from other categories of people such as "left-handed" because, for example, left-handed people may have commonalties among them, but not social structure or culture. From Geertz's viewpoint, if there is a social structure, culture also exists.

However, it seems there are several levels of the disability culture. The first level of the disability culture can be seen in people who don't identify with it, yet know how to live within it. They know, for example, what a white cane is for even though they never use it for themselves. Also, they can *read* a symbol of wheelchair sign in a parking lot and find another space. The example elaborates that they know the meaning of the wheelchair sign. If culture is a shared meaning, as many communication scholars say, these people are also in the disability culture, they just don't recognize or identify with it. In other words, it seems that whether a person identifies with the culture or not is a degree difference of consciousness.

The second level of the disability culture can be seen in people who *know* what it is like to be with people with disabilities such as immediate family members or close friends. Goffman (1963) calls these people the "wise" (p. 28). The wise, who don't have disabilities themselves, know the lives of people with disabilities. The wise know because oftentimes they share the same experiences of people with disabilities (such as being stigmatized by others).

The last level of disability culture is within people whose strongest identity (Hughes (1945) calls it "master status") is being "people with disabilities," rather than others, such as "Americans" or "Buddhist." These people are the disability culture. Interestingly, according to research, some people with disabilities do not identify themselves as "the disabled" (Lewis Harris and Associates, 1986). This fact demonstrates that having a disability does not mean having a high level of the disability culture, but rather, identifying with the disability culture is a matter of awareness or consciousness. It seems, thus, that these levels of culture are accumulative. This means that people in the highest level of the disability culture not only identify with that culture, but also that they can read the symbol of wheelchair and know what it is like to be a person with disabilities. Therefore, it seems that disability culture has emerged with the rise of people's consciousness. In other words, people have always had disabilities, but they have only recently chosen their master status as "people with disabilities" with pride. Also, it is ironic that the disability culture is bolstered by the common experiences, or senses of being discriminated against, or stigmatized.

Conclusion

The paper addresses issues of people with disabilities, which are mainly related to the media. The media coverage, the disability rights movement in the U.S. and its impacts on other countries, and the disability culture are discussed. The paper also explains how the media has changed, in terms of choosing topics and viewing people with disabilities, from "traditional" types to "progressive" ones. More importantly, the research mentions changes within people with disabilities through the course of several social movements. The law has been changed because people's consciousness has changed.

In the U.S., several turning points covered by the media intensively such as the Gallaudet University protest have built a sense of commonality among people with different kinds of disabilities. For future research, an interrelated relationship, if any, between the media coverage of people with disabilities and a formation of the disability culture should be studied more fully.

On the other hand, the media depiction of people with disabilities across nations and its impact on the local and societies are also important to be investigated. Indeed, The impacts of ADA and the emerging disability culture in the U.S. have crossed the border. A politician who is a paraplegic from Moscow, Ilya Zaslavski, was inspired by ADA and made an announcement to introduce a law for his own countrypersons -- a Soviets with Disability Act (SDA) (Shapiro, 1989). Japanese people with disabilities have watched closely what has been happening in the U.S., and they have been encouraged by the disability rights movement and especially by the ADA. Also, many Japanese magazines and journals had special reports about ADA (e.g., *Fukushiroudou*, 1990). A Japanese company has sent young Japanese with disabilities over the last ten years to the U.S., for several weeks to a year, to learn from, but not necessarily to imitate, ADA and the people who made it.

The year of 1996 witnessed another presidential election. Today, there is little doubt that people with disabilities are a strong political and economic force. For instance, in his 15-minute campaign film, Senator Dole and his wife talked about his disability for more than four minutes. In addition, there are several scenes showing people with disabilities. The campaign film clearly shows a difference from the past, when the media rarely showed Franklin Roosevelt in a wheelchair in public. Nowadays, even a depiction of FDR seems to be changed (One Step Ahead, 1997). Some disability groups have tried to increase an acknowledgment of FDR as a person with a disability at a memorial in Washington D. C. They were not satisfied with not having a statue of FDR in a wheelchair on the memorial site, and there would be only two indications of him as a person with a disability. Disability activists, therefore, conducted a campaign titled, "the FDR in a Wheelchair Campaign." Also, former President Bush and Clinton supported an idea of constructing a statue of FDR in a wheelchair. These examples demonstrate that instead of pity, people have begun to feel pride in their disability culture.

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Containment of Image: Critical/Feminst Theory and Perspectives on Disability in the Media

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CONTAINMENT OF IMAGE: CRITICAL/FEMINST THEORY AND PERSPECTIVES ON DISABILITY IN THE MEDIA

ABSTRACT

Using complementary aspects of critical and feminist theory to ground examination, this paper represents a first step toward exploring the macro level concerns informing mass media accounts of people with disabilities. It approaches the stereotypical formations and shallow descriptions of most portrayals through examination of ideological factors that intercalate with cultural forms. The results are then analyzed in terms of the potential for emancipatory media depictions and the concomitant cultural/political/economic formations that are entailed in constructing this

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DISCOVERING PRESENCE

This paper represents a preliminary attempt to explore mass media depictions of disability through a critical studies/feminist perspective in an attempt to illuminate the macro level concerns that imbue media accounts, particularly those of popular film. In examining media narratives, emphasis is placed on the corporeal aspect of disability. Exploration at this macro level of concern is problematic, however, particularly for the delineation of individual aspects, the substantive differences of people with disabilities. Thus, although the intent of this paper is to examine depictions of disability in the media, which generally pull toward stereotypical accounts, it is also important to retain conceptualization of the complex, fluid nature of the referent. As Thomson notes: "disability can be painful, comfortable, familiar, alienating, bonding, isolating, challenging, infuriating, or ordinary."[1]

In the arena of mass media depictions, dichotomous accounts of people with disabilities as "Other" are easily reified as they pass through the filters of hegemonic forces. Particularly in visual media it becomes a means of representing 'Others' to an audience of the 'Abled' who acquire a means of delineating difference to remain external to the classified group. It is imperative that these dangerous portrayals be illuminated and redefined. These depictions help to create blame where none exists and to limit social accountability. Their frame creates a focus of control artificially distancing the healthy from the hidden, and it creates an emphasis on the difference of people with disabilities from other disenfranchised groups rather than establishing mutual interests. Essentialisms may be useful in comprehension, but are dangerous when ingrained and harmful when couched in moralistic tones. In resistance to this dichotomization, the authorial voice that forms the base of the following exploration claims that there is no oppositionally situated perfect person for defining disability. Thus, in asking who is discussed in these pages, the answer is given by Fred Pelka: "We are all only one accident, one virus, one bacteria cell away from being ill or disabled ourselves. The true test of our morality is how we treat each other in the face of this unalterable reality.[2] And the media can be considered a reflection, however distorted, of that morality.

ILLUMINATING THE CONCERNS

The media have exhibited infinitesimal changes in portrayals of disability issues, the perpetuation of the myth that those who are disabled exist beyond the periphery of the acceptable. From Captain Hook to Dr. Strangelove to Freddy Krueger in Nightmare on Elm Street, evil is correlated with physical deformity: Beatrice Wright terms this spread, indicating diffusion of physical impairment to incorporate character. Although there have been some relatively positive portrayals in television advertising - commercials for Safeway, Target, and AT&T, for example - they represent a very small proportion of all viewings.[3] In television programming positive examples include the watcher who uses canes on "Highlanders," Christopher Burke on "Life Goes On," and Benny in "L.A. Law" (although why is he called "Benny" and not "Ben" and why not a portrayal by an actor with a disability?). Yet these are small inroads and often shallow accounts of disability. The focus is on personal problems, not the larger sociopolitical issues such as job discrimination, failure to enforce accessibility laws, or Medicaid's funneling of people with disabilities into nursing homes.[4] Until people with disabilities are themselves the directors and writers, their depiction is bound to remain skewed by an alien sensibility that filters disability through the distorting lens of dominant values, much as Hartmann and Husband argue that portrayals of African-Americans is reformulated and thus denied through the filter of male, white, middle class sensibilities. The differentiating aspect in these depictions thus loses significance. Yet why would these devaluative devices remain such an integral part of media portrayals?

Certain intellectual perspectives help in grounding this issue. Erving Goffman's concept of stigma is one such approach. Goffman's concept of stigma involves a social process whereby the dominant group is legitimated at the expense of the less powerful group in a form of binary oppositions. As sites of stigma, people with disabilities disrupt the ritual of society, threatening to remove control. Robert Murphy extends this social emphasis with the assertion that "stigmatization is less a by-product of disability than its substance." For Murphy, the greatest barrier to full social equity is not the physical flaws but the "tissue of myths, fears, and misunderstandings"[5] attached to this difference. Other rooted fears include those revealed through the work of Mary Douglas, who argues that the anomalous (e.g., the cloven noncud chewing pig) becomes associated with the dangerous and therefore is considered contaminated. Lastly, Lévi-Strauss claims the greatest of all binary oppositions is nature and culture[6]: its powerful influence is observed in the rationale for sequestering women during labor. People with disabilities segue readily into the problematic side of these varied formations.

Framed through considerations of economics, the healthy body and capitalist formations are intertwined. Protestant issues of work and its relation to the normate body are integrally rooted in our notions of disability. Robert Strauss writes of nineteenth-century efforts to help people with disabilities through a focus on the deserving and undeserving poor - i.e., linked to an emphasis on work - versus the Enlightenment notions of education or the medieval emphasis on charity.[7] Engels posits the hand not just as the essential part of labor but the actual product of labor, part of a process of an agency of change, or remaking itself in an Lamarckian evolutionary sense.[8] In Marx, the severing of the worker from his extended body is embedded in the separation of the worker from the means of production, the reproduction of the capacity for bodily work to be sold the following day, and the ultimate failure of the body to reproduce/renew, resulting in the "magnified body' wasting away from occupational disease. Further, in Grundrisse similar concerns are echoed in statements such as "what turns the soil into a prolongation of the body of the individual is agriculture."[9] Robert Murphy also treats the modern inculcation of body as work related. The shift in focus on the body from practical to fetishist terms, with cleanliness, body sculpting, and even surgery used to create an aesthetic and morally pleasing body, actually becomes a consideration for work. One can obtain higher incomes and success with a youthful, energetic, trim figure.

Modern and postmodern interpretations of the body are evident in Foucault's writings and their historical groundings, yielding yet another perspective. Foucault perceives the modern impetus for control as essential in how we interact with the body. Formerly, in premodern society power and privilege were indicated through distinguishing "markers;" in modern the unmarked becomes privileged and difference becomes subaltern. This informs Marie-Hélène Huet's interpretation that living 'monsters' (those with birth defects) were, before the Enlightenment with its rationalist science, considered not inferior or to be shunned but as "marvelous messages to be read..revealed in the etymological link between "monster" and "de*monstr*ate."[10] She asserts that the accounts delineate a belief that these 'monsters' represent the mother's desires or longings at the time of conception, simultaneously reinforcing the concept of female as deformed male as well as evincing the threatening power of woman's imagination. Harlan Hahn offers evidence that in previous cultures people with disabilities were held in high esteem: Oedipus's lameness and Homer's blindness had ennobling meanings.[11] In the Middle Ages, invalids and the infirm were considered part of suffering, god's plan, and were interwoven into concerns of charity and morality. Yet these arguments also have their limitations: it is important not to overly romanticize ethical treatment in former eras. Despite the relative ubiquity of difference in the premodern, the infirm were still marginalized and imbued with liminal identities. And society still has ennobling functions for the supercrip: observe Stevie Wonder or Christopher Reeves in this light. This does not mean that our culture ennobles people with disabilities; rather, a certain admiration for endurance and triumph as these characteristics serve ideological ends may be a more resonant interpretation. Also, in ancient Athens as well as Rome, deformed infants were allowed to die through exposure. The Hebrews conflated disability with evil: "Leviticus identified impairments as legal impurities...the blind, deaf and lame were forbidden to present offerings"[12]: this aspect also had currency in the Middle Ages. Historically, disability has primarily been conflated with markers of distinction when ideology was served.

Other of Foucault's essential insights reverberate in accounts of disability. The Birth of the Clinic details his conceptualization of surveillance and control of the body, with links to the medical discourse in which bodies become categorized, where health forms connections to moral virtues and become managed through medicine via control of emotional pain, abortion of the deformed, and other stances that contain uncomfortable links to more recent practices of control such as sterilization of the "Other" and the shameful medical studies on the African-American men at the Tuskeggee Institute. The World Wars began the focus on replacement and substitution of parts, compensation, and rehabilitation for entry into society. This begins, according to Stiker, our denial of difference and distance from etiology. The modern grounds difference in ordinariness and as something to be integrated through therapy and adaptation, through control. Implicit in this modern sense of control is the presumption that we determine our fate and the illusion in our sense of equality that difference can be denied. Through controlling institutional structures, difference strives to become invisible. The visibly disabled serve to illuminate the contradictions inherent in this stance, unless society can find ways to obscure their presence.

POLITICS NOT PATHOLOGY

Attempts have been made to illuminate concerns through grounding in theory. Labeling theory and social pathology models have permitted analyses that draw to understandings of people with disabilities as an object of pity or the supercrip[13]. With roots in Goffman's considerations, labeling theory postulates that an individual is stigmatized when he or she is called deviant, with the media integral in labeling deviance. Social pathology models examine how people with disabilities become disadvantaged clients, dependent upon society for economic support.

Recent models of disability have examined a civil rights approach, holding that people with disabilities are restrained by societal unwillingness to accommodate them. The resultant dialogue constitutes the focus of current disability scholarship, and its emergence came as a result of concerns relating to the medical model of disability. The medical model concerns itself with people with disabilities as object and focuses on curative paths. With its emphasis on the physical nature of disability, it tends to conflate the part with the whole.[14] The medical model tends to define a universal disability, with an emphasis on restriction or lack and thus emphasizing the physical traits of disability. This model identifies a disabled person, not a person with a disability, thus restricting the examination of society's attitudes and structural problematics that hamper the potential of people with disabilities. In a recent survey that attempted to elicit unprompted replies about disability, most responses focused on medical aspects. There were no responses lending support to a view of society's complicity in disability, nor to a view of people with disabilities as an independent person.[15]

While the medical model is imbued with the intent for a cure, the social model draws to elements of society that create barriers for people with disabilities. Social constructions draw attention to prejudices and exclusionary institutional forces and yield to political considerations.

The social model creates a strong, dynamic focus for empowering people with disabilities and demands that media attention be given to the voice of people with disabilities. The social model is the current frame for intercalating issues of civil rights with the varied but specific concerns of media portrayals of disability. But can the media truly address issues in a fashion that enhances understanding? It is often argued that in examining international relations, women's issues, ethnic strife, or the struggle of gays and lesbians, the media tend to work with conventions that create shallow characterizations, not understanding. Are there broader theoretical perspectives that can be used to anchor these concerns in exploring media depictions of people with disabilities, creating a grounded frame that addresses many of the aspects examined so far while creating an appropriate politicized scope for exploration?

LOCATING THEORY

Feminism draws to considerations of how the body is read and tends to partially politicize the issue of stigmatized, underrepresented groups. Rosemarie Thomson argues for a feminism of disability that uses both strategic cultural constructionism to destigmatize the body as well as strategic essentialism to "authenticate individual experience,"[16] resulting in a powerful narrative that claims physical difference without the problematic lack observed in the medical model. Incorporating strands of feminist standpoint theory, Thomson calls for a theoretical approach that incorporates a postmodern realization that there are pluralities of identity, that the meaning of the body is a cultural (e.g., media) construction and is tied to ideological structures of control, that existing norms necessitate questioning, and that the act of representation from a specific named position ("extraordinary bodies") is a political act and thus connects to concerns of individual experiences, thus bonding to elements of the social model.

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Feminism and disability have patterns of confluence: "both female and people with disabilities body are cast as deviant and inferior; both are excluded from full participation in public as well as economic life; both are defined in opposition to a norm that is assumed to possess natural physical superiority;"[17] and both invoke cultural images of abnormality that become entrenched in medical concerns to 'improve' images to fit standards of beauty. Further, feminism pulls toward Sedgwick's "universalizing" view of difference, where difference has significance in wide ranging accounts, versus a minoritizing view, which presents difference in terms of narrow interests and concerns.

Complimenting the feminist perspective, the critical theorist vein of mass culture draws on views of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Lowenthal, and Habermas and "is based in the rise of civil society and, more specifically, the development of capitalism."[18] Marcuse viewed mass media in terms of its influence upon the preservation and reproduction of the economic and political order, asking if media is the conscience of society. Horkheimer and Adorno raise the issue of how the individual is intercalated into the realm of ideology and the culture industry. In this sense, ideology refers to the Western ideology that "establishes the national and consensual assumptions of the entire society. In order to maintain this dominance [it] must...continuously disguise or displace...inevitable contradictions.[19] One contradiction is embedded in the fact that only the lives of "faithful members"[20] are reproduced in this supposedly open and democratic society: the "most mortal of sins is to be an outsider." In this ideological matrix, the "healthy" worker is provided for by the managers of the economy: anyone outside is suspect. Here are the core concerns that underlie the economic considerations that relate the normate body to work, as well as the controlling elements that imbue Foucault's historical assessments.

Critical theorists conceive of pleasure forming the basis for existence in capitalist consumer societies. Contradictions are inevitably exposed and concealed: by "emphasizing the 'heart of gold,' society admits the suffering it has created"[21] and confronts this problem through the culture industry's use of pity and/or synthesized tragedy: "tragic fate becomes just punishment."[22] Admittedly, there are problems with binary oppositions and elitist stances in Dialectic of Enlightenment, yet the basic tenor of "The Culture Industry" reverberates with considerations that are being played out today in issues such as ideological control through framing, postmodern concerns of simulacrum, the predominance of effect over idea, and pleasure as ideal, as ersatz escape. Those who have examined the portrayals of people with disabilities may strongly agree with the critical theorists' assertion that "the bread which the culture industry offers man is the stone of stereotype"[23]

Given these concerns - if feminism questions the body as tied to ideological formations, if power relations and corporeal materiality are means of oppression, if the ideology of the culture/mind industry pulls away from self-actualization, if tragedy is just punishment as means of containing and concealing societal injustice, if the mind industry reifies technology and flights of pleasure rather than illuminates aspects of life, if immersion in work and consumption are dominant concerns - how do these intersections apply to U.S. media coverage of people with disabilities? Further, how do Habermas's concerns with media's potential as facilitating, empowering agent mesh with these accounts?

UNEARTHING THE ACCOUNTS

The obsession with ideological forces, central in feminist and critical concerns, is a paramount aspect of many media portrayals of people with disabilities. The positive portrayals tend to revolve around white male working characters who strive - yet often fail - to segue with dominant values. Benny works alongside the 'real adults' in "L.A. Law" and thus reaffirms his worth; the son who is deaf in Mr. Holland's Opus is framed through his relationship to his car (although he only fixes it) and his teaching (paternalistic overtones - he is a teacher like his father, although unlike his father he can not commit); Pacino's character in Scent of a Woman leads a marginalized existence while his fanciful indulgence indicates his potential as a consumer; Christopher Reeves works, albeit through implicit charity, and in media portrayals he is now the symbolic supercrip, with stress on his activities as a director and his efforts to promote a cure. Reeve's "nonfictional" portrayal resonates with the medical model's emphasis on rehabilitation, healing, and cure, as well as the reification of technology. On one level we are aware that these accounts individualize disability and draw away from universalizing approaches; further, they draw toward white male interests. Yet just as significantly the economic base of both fictional and nonfictional portrayals becomes cloaked in issues that highlight idealistic emotional appeal and patronizing, incomplete insertion into market values, not the more accurate economic or social aspects of people with disabilities and of society as a whole.

Reality becomes hidden on many levels. "Integration" is achieved through adoption of the nondisabled ideological stance, of white male normality. Bodies are not destigmatized in media accounts, nor are there pluralities of concern: generally, the focus is on bodies that are homogeneously trim, stereotypically attractive, white, and male. Dominant values of marriage and work predominate in contradiction or exclusion of the disability. In Forrest Gump, the injured veteran, the ideology's dominant white male war-victim portrayal of disability, only becomes whole when his emotional burden is lifted and his redemption catalyzed by a savior who is physically nondisabled: the veteran then acquires work, a new suit that covers his amputated legs, and the ultimate trophy: a white woman who is nondisabled.

Not only does this example show how little has changed since Howard Russell's emotive transformation in Best Years of Our Lives, it also demonstrates the web of design that highlights the necessity for the healthy normate body to be aligned with work and the commodification of individuals (i.e., self-assessment of the person with disability's inferior status through labor, especially subaltern labor, and through acquisition, especially subaltern acquisition: second-hand or illusory acquisitions (the cars in Mr. Holland's Opus and Rain Man) and white woman as trophy (although she can not be as normatively exciting, active, or attractive as the female lead). People with disabilities can rarely be framed as adequate consumers or workers. The intersection of work and disability becomes complicated because, like the homeless, people with disabilities threaten the fantasized and idealized linkage of work to normate body; they reveal the inequity and distress that congeals the flow of ideas like equality and justice. And with their bodies they stress both the guilt and the vulnerability of the nondisabled worker: the object consumes the soul. This is further complicated through the mass media's own historically embedded economic considerations. The mass media, with their focus on daily routine and historical links to commerce, have indissoluble links to capitalism and its routine structures. It is no wonder that media corporations demand brutal hours; it is also no wonder that repetitive stress syndrome is a leading cause of disability among journalists. The capitalist covenant between work and the body are indissoluble forces for media production, thus it seems natural this relationship would also underscore constructions of people with disabilities.

Oppressive ideological constructs of family also signify in these accounts. Implicit in Life Goes On and Forrest Gump are assumptions that the family, and particularly the female members, will perform roles that in other cultures would be assumed as the proper function of the state. In this way, the U.S. media tends to reflect government movement away from providing social services through placement in family values: hardship becomes disguised as personal responsibility. Gender difference in disability portrayals mimic U.S. societal concerns: "husbands [with disabled wives] become part-time nurses, which goes against social conventions, and wives find themselves with an additional child, which doesn't"[24] Thus characters with disabilities are usually heterosexual white males with an abled, white female companion (e.g., The Waterdance, Coming Home, The Best Years of Our Lives) or a white woman given an almost irrelevant heterosexual relationship (Passion Fish). These aspects serve to conceal, through emotional containment, important economic/social problems that may not be aligned with dominant ideological values.

Tragedy as just punishment and disability as icon of evil indeed reverberate throughout accounts of people with disabilities. A study conducted jointly by Marc Rubner at the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communication, the Corporation on Disability and Telecommunications, and the Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center found five frequent characterizations of disability to add to the supercrip or object of pity: the monster, the dunce, the psychopathic killer, the martyr, and the victim resigned to die. Where is the room for a realistic portrayal in these categories? Further, a kind of reformulated tragedy imbues these classifications, the final destiny of those who inhabit spheres outside the center of society. A television study by Cumberbatch and Negrine found that "disabled characters in U.S. productions were...lower on the socioeconomic scale than able-bodied characters [and] over three times as likely as able-bodied characters to be dead by the end [of the television program]."[25] Over 50% of these deaths involved violent ends.[26] As Douglas notes, the anomalous becomes the dangerous. Seventy percent of villains in U.S productions were mentally ill[27] and characters with disabilities were over twice as likely as the able-bodied to be victims of violence,"[28] with women more likely to be the victims.[29] Abstract inquiry into dimensions of people with disabilities is rarely given; indeed, they become dramatic mechanisms to guide the fictions as well as to conceal the true nature of the victimization. Through tragedy the injustice of the ideological system becomes a justification of treatment for those who do not cooperate, who fail to be initiated into dominant values.

If destruction is not possible, another observable tactic involves producing an inviable "Other" to assuage our guilt while bolstering the structural constraints of capitalism and patriarchy. Rain Man plays out the disease of the week in film format, with Dustin Hoffman depicting a one-note autistic Tiny Tim in a buddy film that rehashes the conversion of Cruise's Scrooge. It is a film that America loved as a means of atonement for guilt over the excesses of the 80s and for its declining social policies. The film reifies the worst of stereotypes: note the lack of growth of the characterization of the disabled in this case, he does not develop in any sense, and the strong paternalistic elements. The wealth that generates the 'abled' brother's envy and gives the film its momentum is supplied by the father, who in his wisdom left his estate to Raymond; further, the paternal director of Raymond's institution is a protector in the best christian tradition. Consumerism is perceived as a problematic state in this film, yet paradoxically Raymond is valorized for his astounding performance at the blackjack table in Las Vegas (not to mention the attraction of the 1949 Buick Roadmaster). The contradictions are inevitable: how can a high-grossing film questioning consumerist values place the blame where it belongs? For Rain Man, the message is that autism impairs us all, and that television with its overwhelming banality is the cause of our "ethical seizures."

A similar faltering attempt to expose the cold heart of capitalism in the context of disability is observed in The Waterdance. Again, characters with disability are marginalized from consumerist and hence power situations: food, cars, money are shared by characters who are 'abled'. In the end, the men do assert power through self-actualization and physically subdue the insensitive phone operator. Yet this assault on the symbolic communications process again references blame where it does not belong, to a reflective media system. While the problematic nature of capitalist formations is partially excavated, it is quickly interred: it is easier to find scapegoats in communications (note that this never includes films) rather than analyze the complex agonistic interplay that emanates from structural concerns.

These varied and intertwined considerations become focal concerns for people with disabilities. An examination of the movie Star Trek: First Contact brings many of these issues to the fore. While the movie does not directly deal with disability, it nonetheless contains several parallel formations. In this movie, as in the television show, Data's is a positive portrayal. His technology is hidden in a human skin, and pleasure can be attained due to the invisibility of the foreign components. Further, the manifest technical nature of modern science must be disguised, lest difference become visible and the connection between ideology and individual's social position become exposed. In essence, participation at this level would potentially shift the consumerist focus from dramaturgical leisure to ideological awareness.[30] Due to this concern, as well as other, varied interests previously mentioned (the force of the culture versus nature dualism, Foucault's historically based classifications leading to rehabilitation and nominal difference, the stigma/anomaly as dangerous, the denial of difference in concepts of equality) concealment becomes essential. But with the Borg, we clearly see the technological structure of their being: the nonhuman components are observable and thus referent displeasure, the threat to what is human. Their hive-like status on a connotative level becomes an ideological metaphor for the horror of socialism and/or other communitarian societies and is signified in the terror of their deformed, visibly augmented bodies. These are not capitalists: they are not pleasure driven; they do not consume as on the Star Ship with its beautifully appointed sleeping quarters and vast lounge; they are only half-human. And they mirror many of the portrayals of the disabled, although they are also the anomalous organized and thus have more stringent constraints. They are, in a very real sense, the greatest fears of the dominant ideology: the desire to form communal bonds that are not linked to capitalist formations, the ironic threat of losing body to machine while veiling the attempt to reinforce the prevailing domination through the mind industry. From the Bionic Man to Data, our Western individuality asserts itself in the autonomy of individual body components[31], but this augmenting of human form is acceptable only if it is hidden in the guise of the monadic "perfect"/unemasculated human; the "cure" is homogeneity if only in appearance: the pleasure of our ideology demands this. Presupposed in the mind industry is the paradox that the mind is the essential element of enlightenment, the body a secondary consideration, yet the body must predominate in fact as means of concealing the lack of an independent mind. Without the dupe of the body the exploitation of our consciousness, our passive consent, would be exposed. In signifying the "Other" the intercalation of technology and human features becomes repugnant, a symbolism that further serves to conceal the media's own political alignment with hegemonic forces.

This creates great problems for depictions of the disabled, particularly when technical aspects are visible. The homogeneity and satisfaction that ideological formations of the body and consumer capitalism demands places constraints on what can be observed: illumination of difference, particularly organized difference, is paramount to villainy. So those who use wheel chairs, or with artificial arms or legs, those who congeal the seamless flow of ideological homogeneity are often demonized. Geordie La Forge, the African-American character on *Star Trek*, is blind but fitted with an attractive device that serves to remedy his blindness; later he is fitted with appealing artificial eyes that serve as a cure. His is a bejeweled, beautiful disability that can be readily accepted - he appears to need nothing more than glasses; and ultimately he can be cured. But those with multiple amputations are depicted as the essence of evil, and when technology comes to overwhelm the surface of the collective body, as in the Borg, then villainy is afoot. The Queen of the Borg, literally a woman who exists as a head with a tail-like extension that snaps into her mechanized body, is a metaphor for the serpent/woman of Eden who instigates the fall of man; here the person lost in dismembered parts becomes the personification of iniquity and must be destroyed. This is the serpent, armless, legless, that stands for the base of all evil. She also serves as the Queen of the Borg, the central concern of the hive populated by her drones: in this sense, she unearths the links of woman and nature, the threat to the patriarchy. In the film her destruction is not enough: only when technology comes in the externally supportive guise of a ship carrying three intact white males is civilization ensured. These are the images that we bring from our culture and recycle as its myths and icons, Robert Murphy's "tissues of myths and fears," and these are the tales that imbue disability with a form of curse. Some of these modern myths also continue the momentum left when Cold War oppositions overtly faded, and continue to fuel the adversarial readings that link evil with mechanization and communitarian effort with disability as a convenient metaphor (i.e., Star Wars, or the intriguing confrontation of socialism and capitalism played out through disability in Nicaragua's newspapers during the Sandanista regime).[32]

The Queen of the Borg's sexual aspect adds another dimension relevant to the portrayal of the disabled: the status of women. The presence of women with disabilities exacerbates the guilt of the patriarchy, serving as a connotative reminder of the mutilation of women in a patriarchal society as well as the preconscious fear of woman as deformed, emasculated male; it also posits, in the essentialist posturing of the woman with disability as threatening yet vulnerable, the implicit power of women with disability. The links of patriarchy and capitalism are self-reinforcing, and the self-imposed limited sexuality of women with disabilities makes it difficult to intercalate them in this frame without resorting to a nonsexual power relation; and the woman with disability evokes deeply resonant cultural images that were illuminated by Huet. But semi-successful alternative media created to address these issues also has become limited through comparable essentializing tactics: the play of reality is disguised. Thus movies such as Passion Fish and

Strangers in Good Company display disability within a stronger feminist sensibility but tend to operate at the other end of that essentializing discourse. Passion Fish critiques the system that inevitably creates contradictions between ideologically idealistic aspirations and inevitable compromises with reality: not everyone can have a piece of the pie. As one character remarks, all of our dreams come to real estate. Yet the script fails to expand on these promising directions, it neglects the social or political dimensions of the aspects it raises, instead choosing to claim disability as a metaphor for how people are maimed in pursuit of Western dreams and, again, are healed through christian values of suffering and care (yet never communal, never organized, never connecting to larger forces!). The characterizations are brittle and tend toward dichotomous relations with the main characters: the actors who visit are shallow and one-dimensional. Further, much as in Strangers in Good Company, the second order reading of the fish and amphibians in the films, as well as the natural setting far removed from city life, posits strength of women in earthbound settings, exposing the revelatory strength of the anomalous as earthbound and vital. But this has alternate connotations as well: it pulls away from concepts of women with disabilities as potentially strong within the context of present structures; further, it associates women with disabilities to evocations of the primitive, as essences of uncivilized primordial forces. In both films, successful technical pursuits are relegated to men (including the pilot of salvation in Strangers in Good Company). Essentialisms are useful in explanation but problematic when reductive and entrenched. It is argued in this paper that some of these rigid positionings lead to harmful conflicts. A similar situation of dichotomous entrenchment is realized in certain aspects of the cochlear ear transplant issue: the question is how to access concerns without the problematic if understandable posturings of wary deaf individuals foregoing cochlear implants and of medical personnel inserting devices without appropriate forethought to psychological and sociocultural aspects of the person receiving the device. Unearthing the forces that interplay to create narrow perspectives and untrusting responses begins to illuminate the dialogue, a dialogue that must take place outside of existing limiting frameworks.

This is not to undermine the need or significance of these alternative films and their messages, merely to demonstrate the rigidity of the perspective in creating the complex richness of real and potential worlds and the lack of true distance from portrayals such as the Queen of the Borg. By constructing bodies in fixed ways, as extremes in a continuum, discursive formations develop that segue neatly into predominant power/knowledge formations and control.

Other implications are found in the tying of body formations to ideologies of control. These resonant stories, with their religious echoes of suffering and salvation, are increasingly expressed in medical contexts, and there is danger that these moral accounts are becoming intercalated with medical concerns. Already the hierarchical mind/body dualism of Western medicine has created a diminished point of value for people with disabilities. Even in many of the progressive films, including The Waterdance and Passion Fish, there is an emphasis on medical model constructs and bonds to religious formations. Thus the main character in *The Waterdance* has a head brace that is framed as a crown of thorns, conflating medical treatment with issues of suffering and salvation that deepen our cultural misperceptions and expectations of people with disabilities. The media's moralization of medical perspectives can be quite problematic, particularly given the dominant paternalistic frame of media accounts. For example, when health or bodily integrity becomes conflated with wholesomeness and its lack with either sanctity or a corrupt sexuality that draws toward a violent solution, it reinforces the already problematic nature for people with disabilities that their sexuality becomes intertwined with victimization. "Some authorities estimate that people with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of rape and other forms of sexual abuse as the general population."[33]

Instead of a dialogue that helps expose and clarify issues such as sexuality and autonomy, the frames reinvigorate paternalistic accounts of male authority, immerse us in ideological symbolism that simultaneously villainize irregularity of form as well as commmunitarian effort, intercalate superstitions into medical perspectives, and reinforce medical models, the search for a technological cure - preferably a beautiful, if only a superficial cure at that - for what is often, at essence, an inescapable aspect of being. The social problematics that can actually create a disability through inaccessibility or marginalization are ignored. In this context, characters are assimilated through consecration and immersion in Western ideology. This is true of most minorities: African-Americans can be accepted only in the context of middle-class suburbia or via standard professional achievements; people with disabilities can be honored but only if they mimic the expectations of the dominant culture through concealment.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This analysis focuses less on how the media deal with images of people with disabilities than on detailing an approach to the 'whys' of those portrayals. In the context of critical theory and feminisms and concomitant corporeal and ideological issues, is it reasonable to expect media imagery to evolve in a different way in order to realign with reality and create humanistic portrayals of people with disabilities? If theoretical analysis reveals that media accounts tend toward concealment and complacency/inaction, then expectations of media as a nidus mimics the media as scapegoat tactics previously mentioned in Rain Man and The Waterdance. Yet this limited perception of media's power reverberates through much of the literature. Marshall McLuhan perceived television as a means of rejecting the mechanical solutions of print which approached difference "in terms of uniformity and social homogenization...a final pressure of the mechanical and industrial age."[34] But his hopes of emancipatory viewing do not emerge intact, particularly in depictions of people with disabilities. His anticipation of television's potential is apt, but his approach is based on an optimism forged from aesthetic concerns, lacking the historical, economic and political context that grounded theory requires. Further, one can argue that his observed differences in media "temperature" fail to appreciate the commonalities they serve at a macro level, a level which integrates more fully into dominant ideological concerns (Zola and Hahn present more substantive rational for some intermedia examination, but their focus lies outside the scope of this paper).

Many scholars find potential in the realm of agency, such as audience readings. But consideration of audience perception fails to create sufficient space for empowerment. Differential readings are circumscribed due to cultural grounding: as Zelizer points out, there can not be infinite interpretations. Agency is limited. Bennett and Lawrence, drawing on Ettema's and Turow's assessment that mass media can be a site for dynamic, oppositional forces, try to merge concerns of the liberal-pluralist with the critical paradigm and contend that media icons provide one means for "refiguring cultural scripts."[35] But these icons are based on already formed concerns, of "values..or changes that have begun to surface in society:"[36] how often and under what other conditions does this cultural dialogue take place, and how do these values emerge? More progressive accounts on the Internet and in the alternative press offer one source for these evolving issues - but they may not be enough. Change can occur for some accounts, but the history of the media interaction with disability issues is one of stasis.

This interpretation in critical and feminist analysis creates a macro level exploration of the issues involved and weaves into concerns of ideology and emancipation, unearthing the cultural and political agenda that undergirds the portrayals. The media may have effects, but to strive and change only media portrayals is thus insufficient. Undergirding media images are powerful forces that dominate through concealment via myths and ideographs, through appeals to pleasure and homogeneity. Thus in mainstream news we do not observe photos of people with disabilities protesting the passage of physician assisted suicide laws: they not only interfere with our concept of the body beautiful, of pleasure, but they further represent people who can not link up with the ideological myth of the perfect worker, the physically primed individual who forms the core of the capitalist illusion. To unearth their presence efforts must be addressed to larger realms.

Adorno remarks that the shift from a "freely competitive to a virtually 'closed' society into which one wants to be admitted or from which one fears to be rejected"[37] creates an infantile longing for homogeneity and protection rather than true experience or action. Media serve these ends by creating indexical accounts that avoid context, removing issues from earnest consideration and thus thwarting momentum. Stories become tales from ourselves and to ourselves[38]: the familiar encompasses all of humanity while the alien is restricted to the non-human.[39] The dominant narrative subsumes all other voices. Ingstad points out that we know of many tales surrounding the Elephant Man - except those of John Merrick himself. Self-re-presentation is a concept of moment for our particular age and place, rather than the mediating expression we have come to accept as the norm through the seemingly comforting voice of paternalism. Again, how can this emancipatory media surface?

In critical theory, Habermas perceives the possibility of change from an emancipatory approach to social science, where communication becomes a means of participation in the 'lifeworld' and where media enable through creation of public arenas. However, Habermas also realized that media could become integral components in serving other, more authoritarian interests. Thus Gouldner concluded that:" the path from critical theory to the long march through the institutions must go over the bridge of the mass media...a complex system of property interests, technologies, professional skills, strivings for domination and autonomy, all swarming with the most profound inner contradictions."[40] These concerns serve to address more substantive issues for disabled portrayals.

Media use will evolve as part of an organized and politicized effort to reverse a disturbing trend, with an understanding of the huge political struggle that needs to be undertaken. To paraphrase Cornel West, there is either action or despair. The media is not the progenitor of accounts, it acts more as a distorting mirror of hegemonic forces. This does not mean that media should be neglected; rather, it stresses that the media react to dominant forms of society and can be utilized to that end. As Foucault notes, if knowledge and truth are inseparable from power relations and ideology constitutes a permanent condition, then a potential solution exists in agonistic relations within the power nexus.

Further, there are tiers in the media hierarchy: access to entertainment venues is unlikely to alter the forces responsible for health communications or for Internet concerns. These various forms of communication must all be considered part of information strategies to empower people with disabilities. If "the [media] values that dominate our lives today are corporate, not democratic,"[41] then the efforts of grassroots and more structured organizations will lead to reestablishment of the missing democratic agendas, which can be intercalated into media concerns. Only then will the actual voice of people with disabilities be heard: in a society where people with disabilities have a voice politically as well as culturally, where there are actors with disabilities in stories written and produced by people with disabilities. But it cannot be a hidden agenda: the secretive handling of the Americans with Disability Act has created a blurring of agendas and a potential backlash due to the lack of proper ideological channeling via the press.[42]

As with the concept of disability, considerations need to address overall themes at the same time divergent patterns are respected. In moving forward, people with disabilities need to retain the external cohesion of stories with their universal bonds while simultaneously linking to varied differences that serve to construct individual lives. In this regard, clash of identity is not to be avoided. A means toward this end is proffered by Néstor García Canclini. In his work on hybrid cultures he posits that because all communities are imagined communities, and because all insular cultures inevitably resort to authoritarianism, it becomes disastrous to talk of identity, rather we should speak of heterogeneity. This perspective moves away from separate but equal compartmentalization and dichotomies, from the monotony of binary hierarchies. This cultural tact, if sufficiently augmented with political formations, opens up wondrous opportunities for linkages to other dynamics, such as feminisms. Minority rights often begin with a separatist emphasis as a means of empowerment, yet isolated affirmations are historically limited.

The largest dilemma emerges when we talk past one another in dualistic positions. Does it work for the homeless, African Americans, Hispanics, women, people with disabilities, the working class, and other disenfranchised groups to essentialize or to collectively find a solution in ways of varied divergent yet communal voices that penetrate by ranging from the earthbound to the scientific, examining the interspersed considerations existing in the field that contains the political, the social, and the cultural, and deliberated by people who are in turn respectful, earthbound, clinical, emotive, and contentious? Laclau argues that ideology functions most effectively by setting up nominal difference; what better way to react than to overturn the simplistic dualisms that conceal the actual differences, yet as the above analysis of alternative films demonstrate, we have a long way to go. In this frame of hybridity, of legitimation of multiple traditions and oblique power relations, even more flexible medical and social agendas can find common ground, not through reconciliation but through productive, provocative engagement and borrowings. But the production of this admixture occurs with concerted political effort, not merely through dialogue or quick media fixes.

Given this concern, are efforts such as incorporation of people with disabilities into advertising through the appeal of people with disabilities as untapped consumer really going to effect change or is it feeding back into a problematic system? It can only work if people with disabilities have the enormous financial clout to play the game as directed, to play it hard, and to assume the repercussions of having another speak for them. Further complicating a focus on only images, as television faces deregulation and films start to consider the bottom line more, there is fear that these forces will pressure producers and directors toward the inexpensive and least difficult for subjects: depth and sensitivity cost money and time, dramatic structures involving crime or melodrama are far less costly.[43] As previously mentioned, the media serve hegemonic forces; they are more likely to follow once pressure is centrally applied to political and elite (including medical) concerns. Canclini's approach is more promising, although it will only be realized through careful collective and political effort. Critical theory bases understandings and offers routes of political momentum. A new feminist disability formation in its broadest sense can be used to create a hybrid momentum. Through organization, through linkages to other formations such as a feminism that looks beyond "articulations of female identity and experience" to issues of representation that "underlie and legitimate oppressive social arrangement,"[44] through communal efforts to mobilize through a coexistent agenda - this is the only means of establishing a sincere presence in the political, and hence cultural, arena. In the meantime, the media reinforce oppressive formations of control, of rehabilitation and concealment rather than accommodation. There are many forces that create an impetus for people with disabilities to remain isolated and invisible, but to remain isolated socially and invisible politically is to accept an ideological assimilation that all too strongly resembles destruction.

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Community Structural Pluralism and Local Newspaper Coverage of Ethnic Minority Groups and Americans With Disabilities

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Community Structural Pluralism and Local Newspaper Coverage of Ethnic Minority Groups and Americans With Disabilities

This study examines how editors' perspectives on coverage of ethnic minorities and Americans with disabilities are shaped by the nature of their communities. Findings indicate that editors from more pluralistic communities place higher value on news about ethnic and other minorities, and a lower value on stories about Americans with Disabilities. Local newspapers appear to be more responsive to the majority groups' interests than those of the excluded groups.

Community Structural Pluralism and Local Newspaper Coverage of Ethnic Minority Groups and Americans With Disabilities

Local mass media are often considered an important tool for community adjustment to social conflict and social change (Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, 1980). Community leaders may use the local newspaper to control the distribution of information about administratively planned changes. Citizens and representatives of interest groups may use the local paper to argue for or against community projects or developments.

Among smaller, rural communities, the most significant changes affecting the community are often those changes that are imposed from outside the community by large-scale bureaucratic groups (Warren, 1978). Civil rights legislation in the 1960's, and Americans with Disabilities Act legislation of 1990 required local schools and businesses to comply with national standards. Both types of civil rights legislation were bureaucratic attempts at adjustment to system-wide changes that required local compliance, regardless of local conditions. Local newspapers are expected to be important centers of community discussion and debate in these cases, particularly when local leaders are opposed to the mandated changes.

This is a study of community influences on the perspectives of local newspaper editors. Specifically, this study will examine how editors' perspectives on coverage of ethnic minorities and Americans with disabilities are systematically shaped by the nature of their communities. This study is grounded in the observation that local mass media are not likely to initiate social change (Donohue, Tichenor, Olien, 1973). Rather, local mass media are viewed as being interdependent with the dominant institutions both within and beyond the community. Variation in community diversity, or community structural pluralism, is expected to be related to variation in editor perspectives. Structural pluralism is defined as the degree of social differentiation and complexity among occupational and organizational groups within the community and leading to potential diversity in the local power structure (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980, p. 16).

Communities and non-local influence

Small, rural communities are increasingly affected by the decisions of large-scale bureaucratic groups located outside of the community (Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien, 1985). State-level governments often provide incentives for local schools and governmental services to consolidate into larger-scale operations that serve wider areas (Martindale and Hansen, 1969). A multitude of local retail businesses have been replaced by national discount retailers such as WalMart (Flora and Johnson, 1991, p. 49). The decline of small-scale agriculture is, in part, the result of federal and state programs supporting large-scale, capital intensive production agriculture (Hightower and DeMarco, 1973).

Although many outside-imposed changes on small, rural communities result in a decline in status for individuals or groups, other changes are designed to raise the status of specific groups within the community. The imposition of national standards based on the civil rights of minorities and Americans with disabilities attempts to ameliorate injustices by providing a legal means of raising challenges against acts of discrimination.

As with any system-wide attempt at change, some communities find it easier to adjust than others. Smaller communities with lower levels of social and economic diversity may find national standards to be particularly burdensome when the mandates are not accompanied with funding. Local citizens and leaders in homogenous communities with small populations of ethnic and other minorities may question the necessity of local enactment of civil rights legislation, and local newspaper editors may similarly question the need for coverage of an issue that does not, on the surface, appear to affect their communities. However, in these types of communities, persons of color or disability may be more likely to be excluded or oppressed.

Ethnic and minority groups in rural and urban communities

An increasing number of small communities in the United States are adjusting to growing immigrant populations settled in the community by non-locally controlled agricultural processing firms. Local schools and social services are then required to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse clientele (Farmer, 1997). Local newspapers would be expected to be a important source of information in these types of communities. However, the majority of smaller communities are experiencing a declining population, and economic stagnation.

In spite of the growing ethnic diversity of some smaller communities, the need for newspaper coverage of ethnic minorities is expected to be greatest in larger, more diverse communities. In more pluralistic communities, the population of ethnic and other minorities are likely to be more visible and more vocal in expressing their concerns. Because there are more formal mechanisms for raising challenges and airing grievances in more pluralistic communities, local newspapers in these communities are more likely to cover stories providing information about minority issues, particularly when conflict or debate is involved.

Diversity and cohesion of minority groups

Americans with Disabilities have not achieved the same degree of cohesion as other excluded groups (Scotch, 1988, p. 159-161). Part of the reason for the lack of organization among Americans with Disabilities is the diversity of physical and psychological manifestations of disability (Fine and Asch, 1988, p. 6). Another barrier to organization as a social movement is the social and political isolation of persons with disabilities (Scotch, 1988, p. 161).

Regardless of whether or not any one individual sees him or herself as disabled, chances are good that their options in life are limited in systematic ways as a result of socially constructed barriers such as discrimination and lack of physical access (Fine and Asch, 1988, p. 14). Fine and Asch (1988, p. 6-7) argue that disabled people are best conceptualized as a minority group.

Traditionally-defined ethnic minority groups such as Native Americans, African-Americans, and Latino/Hispanics are also more diverse than their social labels would indicate. There is great variance in the degree to which individual members of a minority group identify with their ethnic roots. As was the case with Americans with Disabilities, however, discrimination and oppression are the result of social labels that limit all members of a group in spite of their individual differences. News media are often part of the process by which minority groups are labeled as deviant and are given unfavorable or superficial news coverage (Martindale, 1989).

Coverage of Americans with Disabilities and other minority groups

Americans with Disabilities would rank among the largest minority groups in the country. As many as 33.8 million people of all ages living in households had some limitation of activity in 1990, or 13.7 percent of the household population (LaPlante, 1993, p. 3). However, people with disabilities tend to be stigmatized as being different or strange (Fine and Asch, 1988, p. 16). Media portrayals and insensitive use of language by journalists may contribute to that perception.

Smith (1991) argues that journalists continue to use insensitive language when referring to people with disabilities as 'handicapped' or when stories about persons with disabilities are framed as features rather than covering current issues affecting the disabled (p. 10).

Clogston (1990) found newspapers tended to apply a "traditional model" to discussion of disabilities rather than a "civil rights" or "progressive model". The "traditional model" presents people with disabilities as medically or economically defective, reinforcing notions of powerlessness and incompleteness.

Haller (1996, pp. 14-16) found that the dominant frame for media coverage of Americans with Disabilities changed after the ADA was passed in 1990. Governmental groups were more closely connected with stories about the Americans with Disabilities Act than were disability groups, and stories citing business groups tended to focus on costs associated with passage of the act. Rather than investigate the impact and enforcement of the ADA, mass media tended to frame the story as one of a hardship placed on businesses and local communities (Haller, 1996, pp. 18-19).

Negative mass media treatment of Americans with Disabilities, or of ethnic minorities can be viewed as consistent with media treatment of all groups defined as deviant from non-excluded groups (Shoemaker, 1985, p. 12; Hertog and McLeod, 1995).

Contrary to expectations, however, Fedler (1973, p. 117) showed that minority groups enjoyed far greater access to print and broadcast media than established groups. As would be expected based on Shoemaker's (1985) 'deviance' hypothesis, Fedler (1973, p. 117) showed that the type of coverage minority groups received was less favorable than that of more established groups.

Similarly, Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, and Korzenny (1983, p. 65) found that Mexican-American community leaders said media coverage was more critical of Mexican American teens than of Anglo teens. The leaders also criticized media for emphasizing negative rather than positive news about Mexican Americans, and criticized media for being unsupportive of the leaders' attempts at strengthening the community. Contrary to expectations, Hispanic readers were more satisfied with media functioning than were Anglo readers (Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, and Korzenny, 1983, p. 117). In an analysis of six daily newspapers' coverage of Hispanic-Americans, the authors found that Hispanic sources were regularly used in stories. They also found the papers consistently included a variety of stories about Hispanic Americans (Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, and Korzenny, 1983, p. 220).

The disparity between Hispanic community leaders and the rest of the community can be attributed to the diversity of the community itself. Lewels (1981) found five distinct perspectives regarding Mexican American attitudes toward the mass media, but also found the respondents did not trust mass media, big business or government.

Sheppard (1991, pp. 13-15) argues that journalists' lack of first hand experience with Native Americans results in "stereotypes of American Indians as lifeless, emotionless human beings, distraught with alcoholism, unemployment and suicide."

The current study differs from previous studies of media treatment of ethnic minorities and Americans with Disabilities. Rather than focusing on content of newspapers in ethnically diverse communities, this study uses a wide range of communities from an ethnically homogenous state. Rather than focusing on newspaper content, community leader perceptions or audience perceptions, this study focuses on the perspectives of local media gatekeepers.

The question being raised here is to what extent does the nature of the community affect local newspaper editors' coverage of news about ethnic and other minority groups such as Americans with Disabilities?

Editors and community structural pluralism

Editor perceptions of ethnic groups and other minorities have been shown to be systematically related to the structural pluralism of the community. Editors from more structurally pluralistic communities were more likely to consider members of ethnic minorities as members of the local power structure, were more likely to consider one or more members of an ethnic minority as among their most important sources, and were more likely to consider as important news about ethnic and other minority groups (Hindman, Littlefield, Preston, & Neumann, 1996).

In spite of the increasing professionalization of newspaper editors which tends to minimize community-based differences, editor orientations have been shown to be related to community structural pluralism on a number of dimensions. Editors from less pluralistic communities are more likely to describe community boosterism and identity-building as among the main things their newspapers do for the community (Hindman, 1996). Editors from less pluralistic communities are more likely to emphasize local news over state, national and international news about business and education (Donohue, Olien, Tichenor, & Hindman, 1993).

The local editor serves as a gatekeeper in determining what kinds of stories are published, but is also constrained by both professional standards by community standards. Generally speaking, the local editor is responsive to the degree to which local groups, particularly socially legitimized groups, are organized. Because of this responsiveness to traditionally powerful groups within the community, local coverage of minority groups may receive less emphasis than would be expected.

Given the above discussion, the first hypothesis was stated as:

H1. *Editors from more structurally pluralistic communities will consider news about ethnic and other minorities more important than editors from less structurally pluralistic communities.*

Editors are expected to place importance on news about ethnic and other minorities in response to the greater ethnic diversity in more pluralistic communities. Editors respond to the concerns of powerful groups within the community. In more pluralistic communities, members of the local power structure are more likely to be concerned with minority issues, if only in order to comply with federal laws regarding equal employment opportunities. Editors in more structurally pluralistic communities may also place importance on news about ethnic and other minorities because one or more groups has achieved critical mass and has established itself as among the local power structure. This is expected because ethnic minority groups have a better chance of being represented among the local community power structure in the more structurally pluralistic community.

The second hypothesis is related to the first, but instead is based on the specific types of groups that are included in stories:

> H2. *A greater proportion of editors from more structurally pluralistic communities will include stories about ethnic minorities than editors from less pluralistic communities.*

Larger minority populations in more pluralistic communities makes stories about ethnic minorities more likely to emerge from this type of community. Sources representing ethnic minority groups are more likely found in the more pluralistic community which also will likely have a more diverse power structure. A very different relationship is expected for editor perceptions about Americans with Disabilities:

> H3. *A smaller proportion of editors from more structurally pluralistic communities will include stories about Americans with Disabilities than editors from less pluralistic communities.*

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act placed this story on the agenda of local newspapers, particularly those in less pluralistic communities. Editors in small, homogenous communities are sensitive to the concerns of local business and governmental leaders who had to struggle to comply with the 'unfunded mandates' contained within the

ADA. Less pluralistic communities tend to receive a larger proportion of their local funding from nonlocal sources, and are in turn more dominated by outside agencies than are the economically diverse regional and metropolitan centers.

Local news coverage can be expected to be responsive to the concerns of local businesses and local governments who must work out the implications of these externally imposed mandates. Community leaders in smaller, more homogenous communities tend to use conflict with nonlocal groups such as the federal government in order to reinforce populist traditions and to enhance local solidarity.

In addition, rural, less pluralistic communities tend to have higher concentrations of elderly who are more likely to have disabilities than the rest of the population. Editors may cover more news about this type of group in order to more fully reflect the interests of the community.

Methods

Data for the study came from a 1996 telephone survey of a purposive sample of 52 North Dakota newspaper editors from one newspaper per county throughout the state. The sample includes the main newspapers from each county in the state and represents a diversity of community types. Three interviewers trained for the project called the editors following an introductory letter. The sample includes editors of weekly and daily general circulation newspapers in North Dakota.

Independent Variables

The independent variable was community structural pluralism, defined as the degree of specialization and differentiation within the community. Operationally, it is defined as the additive index comprised of standardized measures of city and county population, number of residents with a B.S. or higher education level, and percent of the work force in non-agricultural, forestry and fishery occupations. Indicators of pluralism were derived from the 1990 U.S. Census.[1] Community and county population are measures which can indicate the potential of the region to support a greater degree of division of labor and more complex organizations, which can be expected to lead to an increase in formalization of social interaction. The work force measure is an indicator of the degree to which the community has diversified the local economy beyond a basic dependence on agriculture. The education measure, when combined with the other measures, is expected to indicate the potential for development of social power among diverse groups within the community. The variable was dichotomized so that the groups would represent more and less structurally pluralistic communities by ranking communties on the index, and then dividing the sample into two equal groups.

Dependent Variables

Editors were first asked a series of questions regarding the importance the editor places on various types of news from various levels, ranging from local to the national and international level. Specifically, editors were asked:

> *"How important is it for you to carry stories or editorials about ethnic and minority groups, such as African Americans, Native Americans, Latino/Hispanics, Asian Americans or Americans with Disabilities."*

Respondents indicated importance on a ten point scale with one representing 'no importance' and ten representing 'extremely important' for each of five levels: local, county, neighboring counties, state, and national and international levels.

Editors were then asked an open-ended question which was stated as:

> *"What kinds of stories and editorials does your newspaper tend to publish about ethnic groups and other minorities?"*

The open-ended question was probed by asking, 'Any other cultural or ethnic groups'. Responses to the open-ended item were coded as to the type of group mentioned in one or more of the stories, including: **African American, Native American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian American, Americans with Disability, and Other** (Including Norwegians and Germans from Russia).

Two individuals coded each answer and compared findings. Percent agreement between the coders was 92%.

Findings

The first hypothesis was stated as:

H1. Editors from more structurally pluralistic communities will consider news about ethnic and other minorities more important than editors from less structurally pluralistic communities.

Table 1 shows the results and indicates support for the hypothesis.

Table 1. Mean editor rating of importance of stories or editorials about ethnic and minority groups, by community structural pluralism.

	less pluralistic	more pluralistic	t-value
local level	6.3	7.0	1.05
county level	6.1	6.7	.68
neighboring counties	3.1	4.4	2.0*
state level	2.5	3.9	2.1*
national and international level	1.9	3.0	2.2*
summed index	19.9	25.0	1.9*

* p < .05, one-tailed t-test

As expected, there was lower levels of importance placed on news about ethnic and other minority groups by editors from less pluralistic communities, although differences at local and county levels were not statistically significant. The differences were greatest at the levels most distant from the community which reflects the localite orientation of smaller communities, and also reflects the tendency of small town newspapers to specialize on local news and events. When the ratings were summed into an index, the overall means were significantly different, and in the hypothesized direction.

The second hypothesis was stated as:

H2. A greater proportion of editors from more structurally pluralistic communities will include stories about ethnic minorities than editors from less pluralistic communities.

Table 2 shows that the hypothesis was supported for the two main groups mentioned by editors: Native Americans and Latino/Hispanics.

Table 2. Editor mention of Native Americans and Latino/Hispanics in stories about ethnic groups and other minorities, by community structural pluralism, in percent.

	less pluralistic	more pluralistic	Chi-square
Native Americans	3.8%	42.3%	10.8**
Latino/Hispanics	3.8%	19.2%	3.0+
	N:26	N:26	

As expected, a significantly larger proportion of editors from more pluralistic communities were likely to mention stories about Native Americans, and/or Latino/Hispanics when asked "What kinds of stories and editorials does your newspaper tend to publish about ethnic groups and other minorities?" This supports the hypothesis that the nature of the community affects coverage of ethnic minority groups.

The last hypothesis was stated as:

H3. A smaller proportion of editors from more structurally pluralistic communities will include stories about Americans with Disabilities than editors from less pluralistic communities.

Table 3 shows support for this hypothesis as well.

Table 3. Editor mention of Americans with Disabilities in stories about ethnic groups and other minorities, by community structural pluralism, in percent.

	less pluralistic	more pluralistic	Chi-square
Americans with Disabilities	34.6%	11.5%	3.9*
	N:26	N:26	

Nearly three times the proportion of editors from less pluralistic communities mentioned stories about Americans with Disabilities when asked what kinds of stories and editorials the newspaper publishes. This is consistent with the idea that less pluralistic communities are likely to be strongly influenced by externally imposed changes. Editors of small-town newspapers devote a greater proportion of local coverage to the local impact of non-local mandates, particularly when local leaders are resistant or when the community has difficulty with adjustment.

Editors' descriptions of coverage

By examining the comments of the editors, it appeared that most recalled stories that seemed to serve the interests of the ethnic minority groups, and not those members of non-excluded groups who are concerned with coping with federal guidelines. Instead, the majority tended to mention feature-types of stories. For example, a weekly newspaper editor contrasts his coverage with that of a daily:

> *[We cover] cultural stories. [The] dailies emphasize bad things. My tendency is to emphasize cultural items - pow wows, historical aspects. I want to find out what people say. [We] had a woman who adopted a Black child - did a story. [We] did stories about a sacred site - learned native name for places.*

However, a daily editor also expressed his paper's emphasis on culturally sensitive coverage:

> *"[We cover] quite a bit about Fort Totten and White Earth (MN), Turtle Mountain [area tribes of Native Americans]. [We are] also aware of cultural events & holidays - Native American & Hispanic."*

The migrant laborers in some communities are the subject of feature stories, as indicated by the following editors, both from more pluralistic communities:

> *[We write] educational stories about migrant population.*

> *[We write] stories on migrant farm workers. [We do an] occasional feature on individuals & stories on migrant school. In summer [we] try to do stories that will be of interest to Hispanic migrant workers.*

Other editors from pluralistic communities tended to reflect more of the types of concerns that would be expected among non-excluded groups:

> *[We have a] large Native American community nearby... [We] try to stress positive news - discuss gambling issue as Indian gaming grows. [We write] editorials about alcoholism & Native Americans.*

> *[We cover a] lot of legal news about Indian affairs out of the legal court system.*

Based on editor comments, it appears the relationship between structural pluralism and inclusion of stories about ethnic minorities stems from a combination of service to the local ethnic minority group and service to members of majority groups. Minority groups may need coverage to feel included in the community. Majority groups, however, may use the local mass media to monitor their environments, observe social change within the community, and, perhaps to reinforce their concerns about the growing status and visibility of minority groups in the community.

One of the main hypotheses of this study is that communities tend to report on issues that are sources of difficulty or conflict. It was expected that smaller, more ethnically homogenous communities would be more likely to experience difficulty in adjusting to the Americans with Disability Act. An examination of editor's responses does not reveal that the communities had any difficulty adjusting, however. An editor from one of the less pluralistic communities mentioned Americans with Disabilities in the context of local response to non-local mandates:

> *[We covered the] Americans with Disabilities Act when courthouse/schools forced to comply stories.*

Another editor from one of the less pluralistic communities mentioned the ADA, while also explaining why his paper did not cover stories about ethnic minorities:

> *[We cover] ADA stories. There are no ethnic minorities [in the community except for]... Germans from Russia ... [and] one Black man in county.*

However, the majority of editors tended to mention the type of coverage that would tend to reinforce stereotypes about Americans with Disabilities:

> *[We do] features - people with disabilities achieving goals etc. [We don't] don't seek it out.*
>
> *[We write an] occasional feature about [a] disabled person [or] individual [such as an] older person [who is] hanging in there.*

These types of stories tend to serve majority groups who tend to be reassured by the idea that disability is an individual problem that can be overcome through sufficient personal effort.

The perspective which seems to underlie the type of coverage recalled by the editors in this study is at odds with the underlying idea of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA suggests that 'disability' is in a large part, socially imposed through the creation of physical barriers (Fine and Asch, 1988, p. 16). When Americans with Disabilities are portrayed as heroic individuals who are 'overcoming disabilities' and achieving goals, local media tend to reinforce the stigma associated with disability.

Similarly, Wilson and Gutierrez (1995, pp. 152-158) argue that coverage of ethnic minority groups achieves the most advanced levels when nonwhites are reflected in all types of news, not just in features stories or crime stories.

It would appear that there are significant differences in the way editors from different types of communities report stories about ethnic and other minorities. However, all newspaper coverage appeared to fall short of Wilson and Gutierrez' (1995) standard in which minority status is treated as being incidental to the story. Local newspapers vary in the way that different types of minority groups are covered, but in all cases, tend to most closely reflect the interests and concerns of powerful, non-excluded groups within the community.

Summary

This study has examined community influences on local newspaper editors' perspectives on coverage of groups affected by non-local mandates such as the 1960's civil rights legislation and the 1990 Americans with Disability Act. Editors from more pluralistic communities were shown to place higher value on news about ethnic groups and other minorities. A greater proportion of editors from more pluralistic communities could recall including stories or editorials about ethnic minorities, and a smaller proportion of editors from more pluralistic communities could recall including stories about Americans with Disabilities. The greater coverage of Americans with Disabilities in smaller, less pluralistic communities can be explained by observing that these types of communities are increasingly comprised of elderly residents who are more likely to have disabilities. However, an examination of the types of stories mentioned by the editors leads to the conclusion that the coverage is more likely to serve the majority population than people with disabilities. The stories focus on the local enactment of the ADA mandates, or tend to feature individuals who have triumphed over their disabilities. In either case, the local mass media appear to be more responsive to the majority groups' interest in ethnic groups and other minorities rather than being responsive the interests of the excluded groups.

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Notes

.. Chronbach's alpha = .89